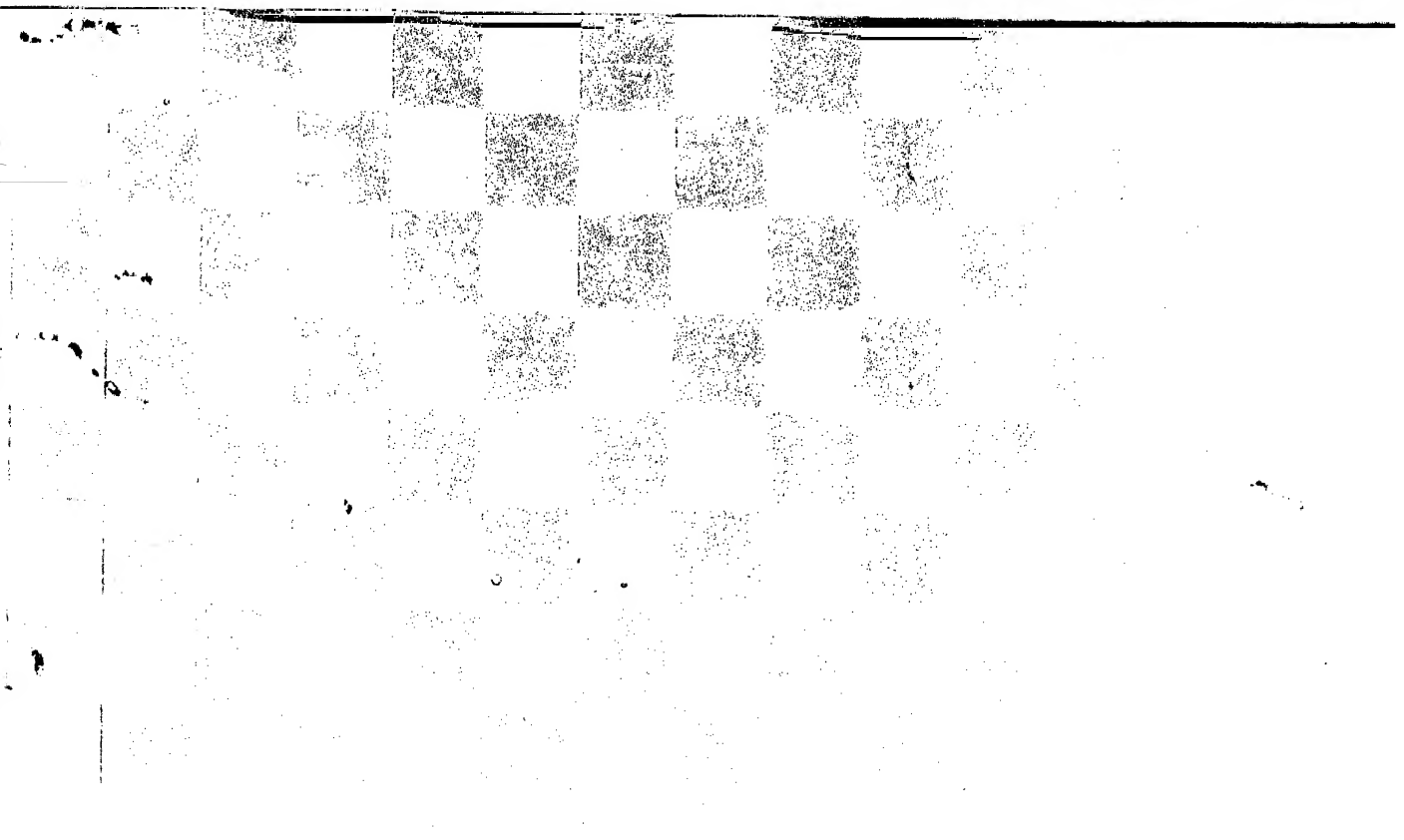




શ્રી મુનિશ્વર



রবীন্দ্রজীবনী

শ্রীপ্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়

রবীন্দ্রজীবনী

এখন চারটি খণ্ডই পাওয়া যায়

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সুদীর্ঘ জীবনের যাবতীয় ঘটনা ও রচনার
তথ্যসমৃদ্ধ বিস্তারিত বিবরণ চারটি পর্বে বিভক্ত হয়ে এই
চারটি খণ্ডে লিপিবদ্ধ আছে।

প্রথম খণ্ড

১২৬৮-১৩০৮ । ১৮৬১-১৯০১ ॥ মূল্য ১৫'০০

দ্বিতীয় খণ্ড

১৩০৮-১৩২৫ । ১৯০১-১৯১৮ ॥ মূল্য ১৫'০০

তৃতীয় খণ্ড

১৩২৫-১৩৭১ । ১৯১৮-১৯৩৪ ॥ মূল্য ১৫'০০

চতুর্থ খণ্ড

১৩৭১-১৩৭৮ । ১৯৩৪-১৯৪১ ॥ মূল্য ১০'০০

প্রথম তিনটি খণ্ড সংশোধিত

সংযোজিত পরিবর্তিত পুনর্মুদ্রণ।

রবীন্দ্রজিজ্ঞাসুদের পক্ষে

অপরিহার্য গ্রন্থ

সম্প্রতি পুনর্মুদ্রিত হয়েছে

রবীন্দ্র
জীবন
কথা

শ্রীপ্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় রচিত এই বইটি চার খণ্ডে
মুদ্রিত বিরাট রবীন্দ্রজীবনীর সংক্ষেপ কৃত সংস্করণ নয়—
এটা একটা নূতন বই। প্রথমত, চলতি ভাষায় লেখা,
এবং দ্বিতীয়ত, সন-তারিখ-পাদটীকায় ভারাক্রান্ত নয়।
মূল্য ৬'০০ টাকা, বোর্ড বাঁধাই ৮'০০ টাকা।

বিশ্বভারতী

৫ দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুর লেন । কলিকাতা ৭

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Councillors, Corporation of Calcutta.

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Item No. P/1-4972

Don. By



MAYOR OF CALCUTTA

Homage

It has been decided to publish a Special Volume of 'The Calcutta Municipal Gazette' devoted to the sacred memory of Poet Rabindranath Tagore. This is the most opportune moment as the year closes the centenary celebrations of the birthday of the Poet, the world over.

Men of almost all nations of the world have paid glowing tributes to the Poet and we in Calcutta, his birth place, are particularly proud of this memorable occasion.

The Poet has been likened to a mighty river rising from its source in the mystic Himalayas and journeying down into the immensity of the ocean—deep calling unto the deep. He was the sentinel to carry the thoughts of ancient India—thoughts saturated with the true philosophy of the East. "Like the Indian civilisation itself he has been content to discover the Soul and surrender itself to its spontaneity." His poetic genius revealed to his readers the calm stillness of the unmanifest future. Great minds admired the completeness of his life, others found all the aspirations of mankind in his hymns. He is known as the saint who has not refused to live but has spoken out of Life itself.

More forceful and exhaustive tributes have been paid by those who are authorities in the domain of arts and letters but I rejoice in paying my homage to this mighty son of Bengal by recalling his message of peace, of friendship with all peoples, national independence and humanism.

R. Majumdar

The Calcutta Municipal Gazette

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION OF CALCUTTA

Rabindranath Tagore

BIRTH CENTENARY VOLUME :: 1861—1961

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Editor's Acknowledgments

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My thanks are due to SHRI BISHU GANGULY for designing the cover of this Volume and to PROF. O. C. GANGULY for acclaiming the same. Of the Photographers who helped me in securing rare portraits of the Poet, I should mention the names of SHRI BULA MAHALANOBIS, SHRI ANJAN GUPTA, SHRI S. BOSE & SHRI BIMAL SARKAR. SHRIMATI SHILA SARKAR, SHRIMATI SUNITA MOOKERJEE and others have also provided me with several photographs. Many other valuable photographs and sketches have been lent to us by SHRI KEDARNATH CHATTERJI, SHRI BHABANEE MUKHOPADHYAY, SHRI AMULYA SENGUPTA, DR. KALIDAS NAG, SHRI SACHIN ADHIKARY and SHRI HARIHAR SETT of Chandernagore. To the Public Relations Officer, South Eastern Railway, the U.S.I.S., the Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Information Officer of the U.S.S.R. Embassy, the Viswa-Bharati and Messrs. M. C. Sarkar & Sons.—I am thankful for their kind co-operation. Some of the photographs published in the "*Calcutta Municipal Gazette*"—*Tagore Volume 1941*, have also been reproduced in this Volume. SHRI H. SEN and SHRI B. SAHA deserve thanks for their art designs. To the Blockmakers—"**THE STATESMAN**", (Process Department), **THE PHOTOGRAPHIC STORES & AGENCY CO. PRIVATE LTD.**, 154, Dharmatalla Street, **THE BENGAL AUTOTYPE CO.**, 213, Cornwallis Street,—I am thankful for prompt execution. To the Printers—**THE IMPERIAL ART COTTAGE**, 1-A, Tagore Castle Street, Calcutta, **THE BENGAL AUTOTYPE CO.** and **THE PHOTOGRAPHIC STORES & AGENCY CO. PRIVATE LTD.**—I offer my sincere thanks.

Lastly, I am grateful to the members of the Gazette Section as well as to my friends in the Corporation for giving me all possible assistance and co-operation.



THE POET IN TEHRAN
1932

১৯৩২ খ্রিঃ - তেহরান



কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট
CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE
TAGORE CENTENARY COMMEMORATION VOLUME
1861--1961

The world today is writhed with the delirium of hatred.

the conflicts are cruel and unceasing,

crooked are its paths, tangled its meshes of greed.

All creatures are crying in anguish for a manifestation of thee

Oh Thou of boundless life, save them raise thine eternal voice of hope

let love's lakes with its inexhaustible treasure of honey

Open its petals in thy light.

O Sirens, O Foes, in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness

wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth.

Thou giver of immortal gift, give us the power of devotion

Chains from us our greed,

and pride of self.

In the splendour of a new sun rise of wisdom

let the blind gain their sight, let life come to the souls that are dead

O Sirens, O Foes, in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness

wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth

Translated from his Bengali songs

by the author

Rabindranath Tagore.

Speak to me, my friend, of him,
and say that he has whispered
to thee in the central hush of the storm
and in the heart of the peace
where life puts on its armour.
Say that thy utmost need is of him
and that he ever seeketh thy straying
heart
through tangle of paths.

Robinranth Tagore

ଆସି

“ଆସି ଡାଳୋ ବେଶେହି ଏହି ଜଗତକେ, ଆସି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନାସ କରେହି ସହାକେ—ଆସି କାନ୍ଦନା କରେହି ସ୍ଥୂତିକେ, ସେ ସ୍ଥୂତି ପରସ୍ତୁରୁଷେର କାନ୍ଦେ ଆତ୍ମାନିବେଦନେ—ଆସି ବିସ୍ତାସ କରେହି ଜାତୁଷେର ମତ୍ତ ସହାଧ୍ୟାନବେର ସାଧ୍ୟ ଶିଳି ‘ମଦା ଜନାବାଂ ଅଦୟେ ମାଜିବିଷ୍ଟଃ’ ।

ଆସି ଆସାନ୍ତ ଅଘାତ ଐକାନ୍ତକ ମାହିତ୍ୟ ମାଧନାର ମଣ୍ଡୀକେ ଅତିଶୟ କରେ ଏକଦା ମେହି ସହାଧ୍ୟାନବେର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶେ ଆହ୍ୱାନ କର୍ତ୍ତେ ଅର୍ଥା, ଆହ୍ୱାନ ତାମେର ନୈବେଦ୍ୟ ଆହରଣ କରେହି—ତାତେ ବାହେର ଥେକେ ଯଦି ବାଧା ମେଲେ ଥାକି ଅନ୍ତରେ ଥେକେ ମେଲେହି ସମ୍ଭାଦ ।

ଆସି ଏବେହି ଏହି ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣୀର ସହାତୀଥେ—ଏଥାନେ ସର୍ବଦେଶ ସର୍ବଜାତି ଓ ସର୍ବକାଳେର ଇତିହାସେର ସହାକେନ୍ଦ୍ରେ ଆହେନ ନରଦେବତା, ତାଁରହି ବେଦୀସ୍ଥଳେ ନିଢ଼ତେ ବସେ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଅହଂକାର, ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଓଦବୁଦ୍ଧି ଆତ୍ମନ କରବାର ଦୁଃସାଧ୍ୟ ଢେଞ୍ଚାୟ ଆଉଓ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଆସି ।

ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଧା-କିନ୍ତୁ ଅକିଞ୍ଚିତକର ତାକେ ଅତିଶୟ କରେଓ ଯଦି ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଡରିରେର ଅଞ୍ଜିତସ୍ତ ସ୍ୱକୃତି ଓ ମାଧନା ଲେଖାୟ ସ୍ୱକାସ ମେଲେ ଥାକେ, ଆନନ୍ଦ ଦିଲେ ଥାକେ, ତବେ ତାର ମରିବତେ ଆସି ମୀତି କାନ୍ଦନା କରନ୍ତି, ଆର କିନ୍ତୁ ନୟ ।

ଏ କଥା ଯେନ ଜେନ ଯାହି, ଅକୃତ୍ରିମ ଔହାଦ୍ୟ ମେଲେହି ମେହି ତାଁଦେର କାନ୍ଦେ ଧାରା ଆହ୍ୱାନ ମହତ୍ତ ଛାଟି ମଞ୍ଜେଓ ଜେନେକେନ ମହତ୍ତ ଜୀବନ ଆସି କୀ ଢେଲେହି, କୀ ମେଲେହି, କୀ ଦିଲେହି, ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଅମୂଳ ଜୀବନେର ଅମସାନ୍ତ ମାଧନାୟ କୀ ଶକ୍ତିତ ଆହେ ।

ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟରୁ



Rabindranath and The Western World

DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN.

BEING a poet, Rabindranath uses the visible world as a means of shadowing forth the invisible. He touches the temporal with the light of the eternal. The material world becomes transparent as his spirit moves in it.

The world is not a snare nor its good a delusion. They are opportunities for self-development, pathways for realization. This is the great tradition which has come down from the seers of the Upanishads and the author of the Gita. They delight in life. For since God has taken upon Himself the bonds of creation, why should we not take upon ourselves the bonds of this world? We need not complain, if we are closed in this warm garment of flesh. Human relationships are the mainspring of spiritual life. God is not a Sultan in the sky but is in all, through all and over all. We worship Him in all the true objects of our worship, love Him whenever our love is true. In the woman who is good, we feel Him; in the man who is true we know Him. Tagore's Hibbert Lectures on The Religion of Man (1931) ask us to realize the supreme in the heart of us all.

The great of the world work in it sensitive to its woes. When Buddha preaches *maitri* and the Gita teaches *sucha* for all, they mean that we can understand others only through love. To look upon life as an evil and treat the world as a delusion is sheer ingratitude. In his play *Sannyasi* or the Ascetic, Rabindranath points out how outraged nature had her revenge on the ascetic who tried to gain a victory over her by cutting away the bonds of human desires and affections. He attempted to arrive at a true knowledge of the world by cutting himself off from it. A little girl brought him back from this region of abstraction into the play of life. No asceticism is ever equal to the task of suppressing living beauty. The ascetic's inmost defences went down before the rapture of beauty, and clamant life compelled him to fling open the doors. The Sannyasi discovered that "the great is to be

found in the small, the infinite within the bounds of form and the eternal freedom of the soul in love". We must bring heaven down to earth, put eternity into an hour and realize God in this world. Ascetics are like cut flowers in metal vases. They are beautiful to contemplate for a while but they soon wither, being without nourishment from the soil. To be firm and rooted, man must consent to be nourished of life. Ascetism, however necessary it may be for the growth of the person, cannot be confused with a mere refusal of the nourishment by which the growth is helped. The saints do not refuse to sit at the rich man's table, nor do they object to the scent of precious ointment.

It is foolish to fancy that God enjoys our sorrows and sufferings, our pains and fasts, and loves those who tax themselves to the uttermost. Life is a great gift and those who do not love it are unworthy of it. Those who lay waste their souls and call it peace cannot obtain the support of Tagore for their action.

One need not enter a convent or become an ascetic to reject life. Many of us reject life by surrounding ourselves with taboos and prohibitions. Interpreting the main intention of Hindu thought, Tagore insists on a loyal acceptance of life. We must face life as an adventure and give full play to its possibilities.

Religion speaks to us in many dialects. It has diverse complexions. And yet it has one true voice, the voice of human pity and compassion, of mercy, of patient love, and to that voice we must do all we can to listen. Naturally, a sensitive soul is bound to be outraged by the social order which is at the end of one age and the beginning of another. We say that there is revolution in Russia or Spain; but there is one in our country too. We also have our guillotines and our victims, though many of those who suffer still go about with their heads on their shoulders. We have become mere walking and

talking phantoms. With our languid paleness and lack of depth, which we try to cover by paint and pose, our lives remind us of the mannequins displayed in the shop windows of Chowringhee.

Our deepest passions are debased by the conditions imposed by society. Add to this the appalling poverty and ignorance in which many people live. If they are somewhat sensitive in temper, they are compelled to spend perturbed nights of anguish and long monotonous days of struggle measuring time by the throbs of pain and the memories of bitterness. When dim thoughts of suicide rush through their overcrowded heads, they stare at the ceiling and smoke a cigarette. Rabindranath has not much sympathy with the prevalent view that social service consists simply in joining leagues to stop cigarette smoking or to advance the practice of birth control. It consists in enabling people to live with intensity of being.

As a poet he despises organisation and believes in each man living his own life in his own way. He is the champion of the individual in his age-long struggle against the mass tyranny which crushes him. The fate of one who sets himself against the established order is abuse and criticism, persecution and fierce solitariness. Tagore is the poet of sorrow and suffering. The pathos of men's striving, the bitterness of life submerged in the shadows, the waste and loneliness of women's lives have found few more profoundly moved spectators. To this audience it is scarcely necessary to refer to the innumerable instances where the poet reveals the anguish that is implicit in common situations.

The most sacred of all human relationships is love ; and whatever our scriptures may say, our practice is immoral because it demands the beauties of self-control and self-abnegation from only one sex. So long as our women are treated as mere servants and toys of the undisciplined male, the social order will continue to

be corrupt. The convention that a woman's virtues are chastity and submissiveness to man is altogether too flimsy an excuse for masculine tyranny. What is virtue in a man is virtue in a woman. It is unfortunate that there are many among us who are cold-blooded libertines who unscrupulously use women as instruments of their lust. They are the human animals, the slaves of sense.

The body is the temple of the spirit, the apparatus for spiritual growth. To regard the body or say part of it as indecent or vile is the sin of impiety. To treat it as cheap and vulgar is equally impious. Physical union without love is the essence of prostitution. This is true with-in as without marriage. A woman who gives herself to a man for whom she has no love, as a mere act of duty just because she is his wife, is as cruelly abusing herself as the husband who insists on his rights. Love is spiritual and aesthetic, a matter of conscience and good taste and not one of law or codes. Married life without love is like slave labour. Obedience to ecclesiastical pundits or social rules is a form of self-indulgence, even as action in obedience to one's deepest being is the imperative command of life. As beauty is higher than harmony, as truth is higher than consistency, so is love higher than law. Like fire it purifies everything.

In all Rabindranath's work three features are striking. (1) The ultimateness of spiritual values to be obtained by inward honesty and cultivation of inner life ;

(2) The futility of mere negation or renunciation and the need for a holy or a whole development of life ;

and (3) the positive attitude of sympathy for all, even the lowly and the lost. It is a matter for satisfaction to find an Indian leader insisting on these real values of life at a time when so many old things are crumbling away and a thousand new ones are springing up.

“TAGORE HAS BEEN A WAYFARER TOWARDS THE SAME GOAL AS OURS IN HIS OWN WAY. TAGORE'S EXACT POSITION AS A POET OR PROPHET WILL BE ASSIGNED BY POSTERITY.”

— SRI AUROBINDO



Rabindranath

SATYARANJAN BAKSHI

MATTHEW ARNOLD, poet and critic, found the key-word for Wordsworth, the *healing power* of Wordsworth's poetry. It was W. B. Yeats, poet and critic, who built the rainbow bridge on to the wonderland of Rabindranath: the enchanted Bengali scene, the song of the rain, and a heart that is pining who knows why, and the breath of its river and sunshine, and its woods and its plains. To understand the expression of all that is lovely in nature, of all that is poignant and sensitive in man, that alone is the key to this wonderland. A flower in a moonlit wayside, the shadow of trees on the turf, flowers in bloom, scent of hay, the pathos of life and death, "the moment that glides for ever away, with its freight of music and light, into the shadow and hush of the haunted past, all that we have, all that eludes us, a bird on the wing, a perfume escaped on the gale"—these, these are the instants made eternity. The Bengali scene, Bengali life, its language, its history, and its faith wove these 'glory-garlands' round the poet's soul. And he found the balance between the localism which is the profoundest character of the country and of the epoch and the general background which fundamental thought provides. His being was sublimated. In the course of his remarkable preface to *Gitanjali*, W. B. Yeats writes of this Bengal atmosphere which like a caress wraps Rabindranath and permeates and interfuses his poetry.

"A tradition where poetry and religion are the same thing, has passed through the centuries, gathering from learned and unlearned metaphor and emotion, and carried back again to the multitude the thought of the scholar and the noble. If the civilisation of Bengal remains unbroken, if that common mind which—as one divines—runs through all, is not, as with us, broken into a dozen minds that know nothing of each other, something even of what is most subtle in those

verses will have come, in a few generations, to the beggar of the roads.

"A whole people, a whole civilisation, unmeasurably strange to us, seems to have been taken up into this imagination; and yet we are not moved because of its strangeness but because we have met our own image or heard, perhaps for the first time in literature, our voice as in a dream."

The poetry is the instant made eternity, the local touching upon and mingling into the universal. Not the wear and the whirl of life, not its smoke, not its roar, the poetry points upward to the sky and the stars, the poetry looks inward for the central peace subsisting in the heart of endless agitation. What endures is the living air, and the blue sky, and the mind of man.

Johan Bojer therefore says that the poetry of Rabindranath presents to the world a new divine symbol, not the Cross, but the Lotus; there shimmers in it something ip-born. His poetry is read and understood, as people would read and understand the Book of Songs or the Book of Psalms, for the murmur of a world, "unreal as the shell-heard sea." Nature is a haunted house, someone has said, but Art, a house that tries to be haunted. In this haunted house, both of Nature and Art, Rabindranath without a stratagem spreads his wings. And what we are permitted to see is a total human being commenting with his total understanding on experience that is an evocation of man's unfolding through the ages, and of the far light from which he has travelled. He presents to us colour and form and speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to our sense of beauty that shades off into the Enduring, a fragment of the drama of Shiva's immortal dance. He wants us to be inheritors of this life of life; the light whose smile kindles the universe. Every line that he wrote is one long ecstasy of denying that the world is a dull place. In every line there is a breath of exaltation, a thrilled mating of sense

and sound, the lyric rapture, the charm of rhyme, phrases of clairvoyant tenderness. Through the gates of colour, through the portals of thought, he looks upon life, and life's earth, in search of a marvellous unknown, and sees mysterious openings into the unfathomable depth of things.

Critics say that in Rabindranath we miss the shark at prey, and the hawk at pounce, evil the terrible and mysterious, fate that smites man flat and seems to crack all nature's moulds. They say he is abundantly mellifluous and floats on in a stream of beauty. Where in or around him is that all too familiar slough of Despond that has many doors, "but all dark, all leading to dark passages"? Rabindranath asks—Is Life only "dim lamps of life that burn useless... as lamps in sepulchre and rebound in a hundred scattered fragments with no one but ourselves to pick up the pieces?"

"This scene of man ;

A mighty maze ! but not without plan."

Rabindranath takes life the Upanishadic—way ; "like the morning radiance around me thy sheen." He is not dazed or duped by this dome of many colours. He does not pick up life and truth, quantitatively, broken into prismatic hues. There is no slapdash either in his art or in his mind, no sense of frustration or emptiness, no feeling of being poised on a razor edge. He is sure of himself. It is true for many of us the light dims and flickers, and we lapse into a shell of slogans and formulas, and stray into increasing uneasiness and forced beliefs. We have upheavals. We have ferments everywhere, and deep-seated discontents. But amidst glimmerings and decays, so says Rabindranath, soft like a charm of bells in the darkness, soft as the twinkling of the stars, rings the voice of hope, not of passivity but of peace, peace as the fulfilment of

freedom, *Shanti* as *Shakti* evoked. He is illuminated by the Spirit's smiling certainties—

"How bright, how glorious

The world I see !"

His poetry gathers together their diverse strains into a single current and flows to a sea of silence in one salutation to divinity in god, nature and man. "I curse not Nature, no, nor death". All belong to the gay romance of song ; it is Life of life, the light whose smile kindles the Universe. It is one Whole, not broken into prismatic hues. It is Benediction. The song is ever a steel flame burning upward from the deeper stillness within. It bursts upon us in the majestic instance of a soul—vibration that has the assured glow of the voice of some supreme consciousness that rolls from the everlasting to the everlasting. It is a sort of cosmic rapture.

Meredith once said, a poet is needed to sing the dawn. The dawn in India was not yet. Rabindranath often appeared in the strife of the throng. More often he sought, apparently, to detach us from the prison of the actual. But he discarded nothing. In him the universe of sense and thought acquired a new potency of response and appeal to man, a new capacity of ministering to and mingling with his richest and intensest life. He appealed to the instinct for that which endures and subsists. He helped rekindle the soul of the past. He revealed a soul where no eye had yet discerned it. He gave anticipations, symbols, tokens and types of India's glory a splendour. He gave the solace of faith to the lips that falter and to all of us the joy of our creeds. His voice is in the winds singing, singing of hope and giving us glimpses of a dawn that is only behind the mist. Beyond the mists of to-day, he impelled us to the Mystery of Power and Beauty, to the wonder, the sweetness, and the starshine of life, free and radiant.

Though Tagore wrote mostly in Bengali, his works have had a deep and wide impact on contemporary Indian literature in general.

The best one can do on the occasion of centenary celebrations of a thinker and writer like Tagore is to advise the people to read his works and appreciate them. To familiarise ourselves with his thought and writings and thus try to imbibe at least a part of his lofty idealism expressed in an equally lofty and excellent style, is the highest tribute we can pay to Tagore's memory.

জ্যোতিৰ ন্যা

প্ৰেমেন্দ্ৰ মিত্ৰ

মানুষৰ ইতিহাস
লোভি যিহা প্ৰানিতে ফোঁপল
সুৰু যোতে বয় দিশাশায়
যুগ হতে বার্থ যুগান্তরে।
কখনো আৰতে বন্দী
কখনো বা ফণিক প্ৰপাতে
ৰাঁপ দিয়ে শূণ্য তয় অপঘা হুই বৰে।

তাই মাৰো মহালগ্নে কোনো
অকস্মাৎ অকিঞ্চ ভাঙ্গল
জ্যোতিৰন্যা বৰণী ভাষায়।

পাণেৰ আকুল উমি
ঔদ্ধ মুক্ত যে আলোক-আনে
পেতে পাৰে সিদ্ধ-মৰ্ত্তা
খুঁজিছে যা এক হতাশায়।

সেই জ্যোতিৰন্যা তুমি
হে বৰীন্দ্র মহাকাশ-দূত!
এনোছ অমৃত-বাৰ্তা
যাৰ লাগি চিহ্ন পিপাসিত
মৃত্তা লগ্ন মাটিৰ বৃদ্ধদ।

পৃথিবী পবিত্ৰ হলে?
ইতিহাস খুঁজে পাবে পথ?
গাড়া দেবে শঙ্খনাদে
বাহায় যা ভবিষ্যত মৃত্তমুক্তি প্ৰাণ-ভগীৰথ!

Rabindra Literature

SUDHI RANJAN DAS



AT a moment when the dawn of a new day was just beginning to break in Bengal and India, dispelling the gloom of the preceding dark and dismal night, mildly reverberating the stillness of the lying-in-room in the Jorasanko Tagore house, that the twenty-fifth Vaisakh of the Bengali year 1268 quietly announced the advent of the youngest child of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. The child was born in the bosom of a family which was saturated with the noble and elevating inspiration of the lofty messages of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and was deeply attached to the language and the cultural heritages of this ancient land. He was brought up under the highly spiritual influence of his revered father and under the fostering care of his affectionate elder brothers, particularly of Jyotirindranath, in an atmosphere of chaste elegance, innate good behaviour and aesthetic taste. It is essential that we should constantly bear in mind this background of the environment in which this child of destiny first opened his eyes and from which he drew moral and spiritual sustenance in later life so that we may profitably study and appreciate the beauty and the ennobling message of the writings of the great poet, patriot and philosopher.

I must confess that I have not bestowed any sustained application of my mind on the works of Rabindranath which is absolutely necessary for a profitable study of Rabindra-literature and, therefore, I dare not launch upon a critical discussion of the merit of his writings—poetry or prose. I shall only make a few general observations as to some of the broader aspects of his literary genius, which have struck me. I think it can be asserted, without any fear of contradiction, that there is no branch of the Bengali literature which has not been enriched by his vigorous contributions.

Take first his poetical works. His poetical urge came when he was but a child. Just as a tiny

hill-stream gushes out of a hidden crevice in the ice-bound mountain and joyfully springs from boulder to boulder forming beautiful waterfalls, gathering volume and strength from other rivulets that join it on its way and travels a long distance skirting the edges of many villages and cities, fertilising the lands on both sides of its banks and eventually loses itself into the mighty ocean, Rabindranath's poetry also gushed out of the rich exuberance of his emotional mind and his aesthetic impulse found perennial inspiration from the cultural heritage of this ancient land, became enriched by the self-expressions of the poets of many foreign lands and eventually mingled itself with the fathomless depth of the supreme soul.

It is impossible for me to make a complete assessment of the priceless contributions that Rabindranath has made to the Bengali literature towards the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the millions of men and women inhabiting distant countries in the world. For the sweetness of his language, the measured cadence of his diction, the richness of the imageries conceived by him and the wealth of the noble thoughts pervading his poetical works, Rabindranath stands apart as a class by himself. Who has not been overwhelmed by the enchanting brilliance of the language and theme of his famous poems, too numerous to enumerate? Who has not been struck dumb by the lofty flight of imagination and the poetic conception of the celestial beauty manifesting itself in rhythm and vibrating throughout the universe? Just to quote a stanza from "*Urvashi*":

When thou dancest in the assembled hall of the
 gods exuberant with joy,
O swaying, billowy Urvashi!
To measured music dance the lined waves
 of the sea,
Shivering to the cars of corn trembles the
 skirt of the earth;

From the chainlet on thy breast the star that falls
 on the floor of the sky ;
 Suddenly in the breast of man the mind
 loses itself,
 The stream of blood dances in his veins.
 On the distant horizon of a sudden snaps
 thy girdle,
 O thou without restraint !

I do not remember to have come across anywhere such a robust, grand, noble and enthralling conception of Beauty, eternal and all pervading, which has found expression in the above few lines. In his "*Saral*" (Ode to Autumn) :

How sweet thou lookest on this autumn morn,
 Bengal, O Mother, mine !
 In stainless beauty shines before mine eyes
 Thy dusky form divine.
 Thy rivers scarce can bear their liquid load,
 Nor fields contain their corn,
 The *kool* and the *doels* dulcet call
 Resounds throughout thy sylvan
 audience hall.
 And in the midst thou standest, Mother mine
 On this fair autumn morn.

The Mother's garland of sweet *Shafali*
 Scents all the earth and air,
 Her garments' hem is trimmed with
 rainspent clouds.
 So creamy white and fair.
 She wears a lovely diadem golden-rayed,
 In green and golden glory she's arrayed,
 with flower-woven anklets on her feet
 My Mother standeth like a picture sweet
 with dew and flowers and corn and
 laughing light.
 The earth's a gladsome sight.²

What a brilliant image of Mother Bengal arises in front of our minds' eye resplendent with the glory of a glittering autumn morning when we read through the enchanting stanzas of this poetic phantasy ! Do I not remember how in our childhood days we used to pore over the stories in poems collected in *Katha O Kahini* until we could see the characters coming out of the stories and playing upon the stage of our imaginative minds ? Can anything surpass the pathos

of "*Dui Bigha Jami*," "*Debatar Gras*" or "*Puratan Bhritya*," to mention only a few ? The two to three thousand songs that he wrote and set to music which are collected in *Naivedya*, *Gitanjali*, *Gitimalya*, and other books of songs would alone have made him immortal, even if he had written nothing else. Each of these songs is an unblemished pearl with the effulgence of its pure thoughts and musical diction. The rousing and soul-stirring *Siradesi* songs that he wrote during the anti-partition movement in Bengal in the beginning of this century, e.g., "*Amar sonar Bangla*," "*Yadi tor dak suney keu na ase*," "*Banglar mati*," "*Mayer dewa mola kapar*," can still be heard in all parts of Bengal. His composition "*Jana-Gana-Mana-Adhinayaka*" has been adopted as our National Anthem and its rich but simple tune is world-famous today.

If the reader bestows a little close attention he will easily discern that several characteristic lines of thought have found expression in Rabindranath's poems and songs. Just as a string passing through the hearts of the flowers sustains a pretty garland, so do these thought-rays passing through the core of many of his poems and songs make up a beautiful wreath. A competent critic may write a volume on each of these thought-rays but as I am neither a litterateur nor a literary critic it will be an act of supererogation on my part to attempt to do so. I shall, therefore, content myself with referring to one or two of those aspects of Rabindra-literature.

The first idea that finds an exquisite expression in Tagore's lyric poems and songs is that of an unceasing stream of life that has been continuously flowing along since the birth of the earth. Humanity is floating along that endless stream through different ages and stretching its arms in search of perfection. Nobody can tell when began this eternal quest of the human soul for the attainment of self-realisation. There is no rest in the course of this journey and nobody can tell when it will end.
 Said the Peet :—

I know not when I set forth
 with your song in my lips.

That is not to-day
 that was long, long ago.
 I remember no more
 how long have I yearned after you.
 That is not to-day
 that was long, long ago.
 As the stream rushes forth
 unmindful of its goal,
 even so have I coursed through
 the stream of life.
 That is not to-day
 that was long, long ago.³

The same theme finds expression also in the following lines :

Since that immemorial time
 when you set me afloat
 in the stream of life
 you have left for me
 many a thrill of sudden joy
 in many a home and many a path
 I know this in my heart, my beloved, I know.

No one knows how through the ages
 many a joy and many a sorrow,
 many a love and many a song,
 have filled this heart of mine
 with the nectar of life everlasting
 I know this in my heart, my beloved, I know.⁴

The same idea of the ceaseless journey through eternity of man infused with new and ever-lasting life by the tender care of the Supreme Being will also be found in the following exquisite stanza :

Thou hast made me endless, such is
 thy pleasure.
 This frail vessel thou emptiest again and
 again and fillest it ever with fresh life.
 This little flute of a reed thou hast
 carried over hills and dales, and hast
 breathed, through it melodies eternally
 new.⁵

It is not necessary to multiply instances. It is not my purpose to say that this idea of the gradual evolution of man from birth to birth through the ages and in course of his endless

journey towards the attainment of his goal was discovered by Rabindranath for the first time, but I do desire to emphasize that Rabindranath did give a new orientation to this sublime idea expressed in inimitable language and that, I hold, is undoubtedly a special contribution of Rabindranath which has enriched our Bengali literature.

Side by side with this idea of the eternal quest of man towards perfection, we find a parallel line of thought which brings to us the reassuring comfort that it is not man alone who is out on eternal quest for meeting the Lord but that the Lord Himself is constantly coming down from His high heaven all through the ages to reveal Himself to mankind and to surrender Himself to His own creation. He who has faith in his heart, can read the signs and knows how to listen, can hear the measured footsteps of the Lord. Mira Bai had that devoted intuition when she sang :

I hear the sound of my Lord's footsteps.

So had Rabindranath, and he asked :

Have you not heard his silent steps ?
 He comes, comes, ever comes.
 Every moment and every age, every day and
 every night he comes, comes, ever comes.
 In the fragrant days of sunny April through the
 forest path he comes, comes, ever comes.
 In the rainy gloom of July nights on the
 thundering chariot of clouds
 he comes, comes, ever comes.⁶

Thus comes the Lord through eternity. He has been coming nearer and nearer to me ever since this earth was born. He has not waited for my call but has been coming to meet me out of the abundance and fulness of His own love and affection for me. He has been secretly sending His messages to me through millions of His silent emissaries and nothing can cover up or conceal His manifestation. So declared the Poet :

I know not from what distant time thou art
 ever coming nearer to meet me. Thy Sun and
 stars can never keep thee hidden from me for aye.
 In many a morning and eve thy footsteps have

been heard and thy messenger has come within my heart and called me in secret.⁷

Although He is the King of kings yet descending from his high altar. He has come and stood right in front of my lonely dwelling house :

You came down from your throne and stood at my cottage door.⁸

But why is this solicitude of the Lord for the mere man ? The Poet answers :

Thus it is thy joy in me is so full. Thus it is that thou hast come down to me. O thou Lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not ? And for this, thou who art the King of kings hast decked thyself in beauty to captivate my heart. And for this thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover, and there art thou seen in the perfect union of two.⁹

It is to celebrate this grand communion of the human soul with the eternal soul that the sky has been flooded with celestial light and it is to witness this union that night keeps vigil with the world in her lap. So sang the Poet :

Because you and I shall meet
The Heavens are full of light ;
Because you and I shall meet
The world is full of greenery.
Because you and I shall meet
The night is awake with the world in her arms ;
And the dawn opens the door of the east
with a burst of song.¹⁰

And when the union does take place and man feels His embrace, then there remains no obstacle separating him from the Beloved :

When you and I mingle
all becomes manifest
The sea of the universe
Swings in swelling waves."¹¹

It is in the ecstasy of such union that man speaks from the depth of his heart :

My beloved is ever in my heart
That is why I see him everywhere,
He is in the pupils of my eyes
That is why I see him everywhere.¹²

It is thus that the realisation comes :

I go seeking him
who is all the while
in my heart.
Because he is there
stars burst forth
all over the sky
and flowers bloom
in my woodlands
of a morning.
Because he is there
in the light of my eyes,
there is such play of form
such complex of colours
in the infinite of black and white.
Because he is there
with me all the while
the southern breeze
sends thrills of joy
all over my body.¹³

The Poet has described the joy of such communion in two simple lines :

And now I have gained communion
with you, O Beautiful One—

Blessed is my body
and blessed is my soul.¹⁴

Then man wants to dedicate himself to the Beloved and tries to wake Him up by gently singing to Him in the *Behag* tune :

The night is dark and your slumber is deep
in the hush of my being.
Wake, O Pain of Love, for I know not
how to open the door, and I stand outside.¹⁵

When the well-beloved wakes up, man asks the inevitable question :

Soul of my Soul ;
has all your yearnings ceased
now that you indwell my soul ?¹⁶

I do not claim that this eternal quest of man for his Lord, this constant coming of the Lord

to meet His creature, this dedication of man to his God are ideals propagated by Rabindranath for the first time. These are part and parcel of our cultural heritage. But there can be no gainsaying the fact that these eternal ideas have found a beautiful expression in the poems and songs of Rabindranath. I have no doubt that those who revel in poetic imagination, whose curiosity is fresh and pulsating, with life will find much pleasure in picking out and analysing many such thought-rays in Rabindra literature. I leave it there and pass on.

The literary genius of Rabindranath was not confined only to the writing of lyric poems and songs. His *Valmiki Pratibha* and *Mayar Khela* were perhaps the earliest modern examples of musical operas in any Indian language. As typical examples of drama may be cited, *Malini* in rhymed verse and *Visarjan* in blank verse. Both of them are exquisite in their contents and composition. Amongst his other plays you may regale yourself for hours with *Raja O Rani*, *Prayaschitta*, *Sarodotsava*, *Achalayatan*, *Raja*, *Dakghar*, and several other plays. I make bold to say that you will not find an equal to any of his several dance dramas, *Natir Puja*, *Chitrangada* and *Syama*—each of which is an unrivalled piece of poetry, music and art rolled into one. He did not leave untouched humorous comedies. His *Vaikunther Khata*, *Chirkumar Sabha*, *Hasya Kautuk*, *Byanga Kautuk* and *Gorai Galad* will ever remain green and sources of hearty enjoyment overflowing with the chaste humour of the choicest and most delightful dialogues.

Rabindranath was the King of short story writers in Bengali and the pioneer in that line of literature in the whole of India. Every one of the short stories collected in the three volumes of *Galpa Guchha* is a gem of the purest ray serene. Each one depicts, in minute details, the picture of the joys and women dwelling in the cities and in the remote villages in the interior of Bengal. "*Kabuliwalla*" and "*Kshudhita Pashan*" will remain things of joy for ever. One has to read his short stories to realise how through their medium Rabindranath tried to eradicate the social inequalities and vices by holding them up to ridicule and rebuke. Amongst his novels mention must be made of

Nauka Dabi, *Chokker Bali*, *Gora*, *Gharey Bairey*, *Sesher Kavita* and *Char Adhyaya*. Each of them is an excellent example of incisive analysis of the minds and the changing moods of the characters of the stories. Each is rich with the wealth of description of the beautiful rivers and the colourful meadows and paddy fields of the countryside of Bengal and with the chaste dialogues. The stories never drag but pulsate with life and emotion as they proceed from chapter to chapter. I remember how eagerly we and, for the matter of that, our elders used to look forward to the arrival of the current month's issue of the *Prabasi* containing a fresh chapter or two of *Gora* that was being published serially in that magazine. It will not be an over-statement to describe each of these novels as a piece of real diamond.

My account will remain incomplete if I do not refer to Rabindranath's prose writings which had a wide sweep in the variety of topics covered by them. This takes us back to his early age and particularly to the time when he was discharging his duties as Editor of two celebrated monthly magazines. *Banga Darsan* which had been started by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya, the author of the immortal *Bande Mataram* song, was in a moribund state, if not completely dead. Rabindranath resuscitated that magazine and personally took up the responsibilities of the Editor. There was also *Bharati*, the well-known monthly magazine started by his talented eldest sister Swarnakumari Devi, which also Rabindranath had to edit at a later stage. As Editor he had to collect articles from well-known litterateurs and thinkers which was not by any means an easy task. Mostly he had to write articles himself. One cannot but admire the originality of his thoughts and the fascinating language in which he expressed them. His literary criticisms and in particular his warm appreciations of the writings of Kalidas and other old masters are models of sober reviews for the depth of the knowledge and insight into human psychology disclosed therein and the pointed language in which they are written. He was a great protagonist of popularising our folklores and folk-songs. His essays on education will give us a clear idea of the lines on which, he felt, education should be imparted to young students. Those essays will

show that he was very strongly impressed with the simplicity and usefulness of the kind of education and training that the young disciples used to receive from their *Gurus* living in humble hermitages in the ancient *Tapovanas*. He started a *Brahmacharyasram* on that line at Santiniketan which has now blossomed forth as the Visva-Bharati.

Over fifty years ago when, except a few thinkers like Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya and Akshoy Sarkar, nobody ever thought of the poverty and squalor, moral and material, in which the illiterate villagers were wallowing, Rabindranath was writing article after article on village reconstruction and the desirability and imperative necessity of co-operative enterprises. He had personal contacts with the villagers when he was put in charge of the management of his ancestral estate by his father and acquired at first hand an intimate knowledge of their problems.

In his numerous essays written half a century ago he suggested solutions which later on he tried to put to test in Sriniketan where with the help and active co-operation of a few ardent colleagues like Leonard Elmhirst and Kalimohan Ghose he started reconstruction work in the neighbouring villages. In short, there is no problem affecting the physical, social, economic and educational well-being of the villagers on which he had not applied his mind and in respect of which he had not made valuable suggestions for the amelioration of their condition. Happily our Government has in right earnest taken up and is implementing the suggestions made by him over fifty years ago.

The legacy that Rabindranath has left for us in the field of literature and social reconstruction is unquestionably unique and invaluable. He has, in addition to that, left a priceless heritage for the world—his message of universalism. When the warring nations of the earth, intoxicated with narrow nationalism, were arming to the teeth with a view to flying at each other's throats and gain the mastery over the entire globe, standing like a statue of solid rock with a torch of heavenly light this savant of India, then a dependent country, sent out, at that critical juncture of the history of the world and

its civilization, his message of peace and amity in an unfaltering and firm voice. His ever-expanding mind nurtured on the sublime ideals of the *Upanishads* realised in the innermost recesses of his heart the brotherhood of man who were *Amritasya Putrah*—the sons of the immortal. He felt that men of dicerent nations must come to know each other and realise the inner unity of mankind. To achieve this lofty purpose he conceived and established his Visva-Bharati whose motto is *Yatra visvam bhabatyekanidam*—where the world makes its home in one nest. His passionate hope and aspiration were that at the sacred *Asrama* founded by his illustrious father the world will find that one nest. This message of universalism is, I apprehend, Rabindranath's greatest gift to the world.

This great and remarkable man with a master mind, the manifold qualities of whose head and heart I have discussed above has rendered endless service to humanity in diverse ways. He has made priceless contributions to the Bengali language and literature. His literary creations have stimulated our sense of beauty with their graceful purity and have inspired our souls with the ecstasy of the divine love. By his fearlessness he has shed lustre on our Motherland. The letter which he wrote to the then Viceroy of India protesting against the callous and brutal massacre at Jalianwalabagh breathes, in every one of its lines, an emphatic protest, emanating from the deepest recesses of his lacerated heart, against the arrogance of the minions of an irresponsible government and in silent sympathy with the sufferings of his mute countrymen. He was certainly one of the few great sons of India to whom we are indebted for the high place that India has attained in the councils of the world. Truly did Will Durant wrote—"You alone are sufficient reason why India should be free."

A century has gone past since he was born and the time has come for us to acknowledge our indebtedness to him. That is why we have assembled here in this conference to pay our respectful homage to his sacred memory. In doing so we must constantly bear in mind what he stood for steadfastly and fearless. He toiled night and day not only to cater to our aesthetic sense but to uplift us from the utter degradation of

moral decay arising out a sense of sheer frustration. He felt for the ignorant and poor villagers in our own country as well as for all downtrodden people in other parts of the earth—in fact for all the poorest, lowliest and the lost. He discussed and suggested remedies for many social, educational and economic evils which he found sapping the vitality of the nation. He was not only a Poet and a visionary but was a sound practical man with a genuinely broad outlook. Our offerings of gratitude and affection on this auspicious day marking the Centenary of the Birth of that Universal Man will be true and sincere and will please his departed soul only if we purify our hearts, practise what he preached and reflect the radiant glory, the moral purity of the lofty ideals in our respective lives. Let us bend our energies and bring about the fulfilment of his earnest endeavour to uplift the

masses and to make this ancient land a fit place for self-respecting men and women to live in. Let us, therefore, earnestly join him in his sublime prayer and supplicate to the Almighty in his own words :

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;

Where knowledge is free ;

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls ;

Where words come out from the depth of truth ;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;

Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.¹⁷

English rendering of poems and songs quoted :—

By Gurudeva : 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17.

By Indira Devi Chaudhurani : 2.

By Nagendranath Gupta : 1, 10, 11.

By Kshitis Roy : 3, 4, 13, 14, 16.

*Sorrows dark night, again and again
Has come to my door,
It's only weapon, I saw
Was pain's twisted brow
Pain's hideous gestures
Precluding its deception in darkness.*

'Sesh Lekha'—29th July, 1911

Translated by Dr. Anura Chakravarty.

ভয়ের আঁধার বাকি বায়ে বায়ে

এসেছে আমার দারে।

একমাত্র অস্ত্র তার দেবেছিল

কষ্টের বিকৃত ভাল, ক্রোধের বিকট ভঙ্গি যত,

অন্ধকারে চলনার প্রায়শ্চিত্ত।

শেষ লেখা—২৯শে জুলাই ১৯১১





The Appeal of Rabindranath

DR. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

A poet, to be great, must, in the last analysis, teach us the art of living. We generally lead a life, narrow, fragmentary and one-sided under the pressure of our immediate material needs and of inherited customs and conventions. The poet initiates us into fuller, richer and more harmonious life by cultivating our thoughts and feelings, expanding the horizons of our perception and stimulating our sense of beauty, our harmonious relations with our surroundings.

Rabindranath has done all this for us with pre-eminent success. He has released us from tyranny of customary ways of thought and a routine-bound life. He has awakened us to the beauty of nature and made us feel our kinship with everything round about us. He has bridged the gulf between the living and the apparently non-living by making us perceive a common bond of sympathy among all objects. He has made us feel the beauty of the revolving seasons and shown that they have a message for us. Day and night, sunrise and sunset, midnight, morn and noon each stirs in him an appropriate mood and emotion. The rainy season in particular stirs him to the depth of his being. Reading his poetry, we learn to look upon nature with new eyes and discover beauties hitherto-unnoticed in her.

Rabindranath likewise trains our emotions and thoughts on even the most trivial occasions of life. The silent processes of the human drama charge his mind with deep feelings appropriate to the case. A beggar girl standing desolate in the midst of the pomp of a religious festivity inspires him with the pathos of life. A four year's girl of his vainly trying to prevent his journey away from his home reminds him of Mother Earth in all her immense horizons sadly ineffective in keeping her sons and daughters in her bosom for ever. The stories in his *Katha-O-Kahini* fill us with a great admiration for heroic ideals of conduct and teach us how

to assess the nobility of life. The most trivial happenings raise his thoughts to the skies and teach us about the meaning and majesty of life.

Rabindranath has revitalised the teachings of the ancient Upanishads, which every Hindu carries in the unconscious depths of his heart. He intuitively feels the all-pervasiveness of God in every object of life and in all human relations and makes us feel the truth of it by his imaginative vividness. This God of the Upanishads becomes to him a playmate, an intimate friend and lover, taking him into confidence in the sports of his divine *lila* and offering glimpses of Himself through the veil of natural objects. He even becomes the presiding spirit of his poetry, urging him to write and even putting words into his mouth. This dry-as-dust world of ours is transfigured for him into a haunt of divine communion; every speck of dust, every drop of dew, every beam of sunlight becomes for him transfused with the tender radiance of Divinity. The dogma of Upanishadic philosophy becomes for him a living symbol of the presence of God. The Vaishnava doctrine of divine love and friendship mingles with the Vedantic Brahma and gives to him a new spiritual insight and intuition.

Of death and the relation of life with it he said things more tender and true and profound than any other poet whether in the East or the West. For him death has no terror; it opens the gateway to a more perfect life which stretches forward in an infinite succession of new existences till it finally merges into the ultimate reality. This is an old philosophical truth rediscovered and felt anew by him. The poems written during the last years of his illness reveal a freedom from illusions, a tranquil perception of the eternal truth about life, a gradual disentanglement from the associations of the material body, a pure resplendence of the soul never put into human language since the days of



অক্ষয়কুমার
 চন্দ্রসিক্ত
 ২.৪.৫০

By Nandalal Basu

— নন্দলাল বসু



A STUDY

By Ramkinkar

— রামকিঙ্কর



A STUDY - 1917

By Mukul Dey

— মুকুল দে

শ্রীমদ্রামকিঙ্কর
৭শিখা -
২২ ১১/০৫/৫৫
১১১৭

the Upanishads. If we accept Rabindranath, we must accept the whole of his philosophy of life.

Rabindranath appeals to a richer diversity of human moods than perhaps any other poet. Joy and sorrow, solitary meditation and social mirth, humour and pathos, abstruse philosophy and concrete relish of beauty all find equally perfect expression in his poems. He satisfies all taste and rouses an answering echo in every kind of temperament. Nursery hymns, old Baul Songs, light lyrics and profound Odes, lyrical dramas and dance dramas—everything flows from his pen with the same inevitable spontaneity. He has provided richer and more diverse entertainment for the men and women of the present age than any other single poet that we could think of. In range of versatility he stands unsurpassed. Poet, prose-writer, dramatist, writer of novels and short stories, a literary critic and a philosophical interpreter of life—he exhausts the whole gamut of expression and reveals equal mastery in all forms and techniques. Single-handed he has raised Bengali language and literature to the status of the most progressive languages of the world.

What is the true relation between a poet and his appreciative countrymen of the same age? The poet no doubt expresses the inarticulate yearnings that float nameless in the atmosphere and startle the heart of his contemporaries with their sudden vision. What all feel in a vague and dim way finds utterance on the lips of the poet. The unconscious soul of Bengal must have been dreaming about the very things that Rabindranath has embodied in his writings. The new vision of Nature, the new thought about life, the yearning for love and beauty and romance, the spiritual hunger that craved for nutrition, the assimilation of Western ideas in such a manner as to make them our own, the perfect synthesis between our inherited and acquired wealth—all these latent desires of the cultured Bengali mind found their supreme fulfilment in Rabindranath. We have found our own purest aspirations mirrored in his writings. So he is of us, an emanation from our own soul clothing itself in a radiant vesture we could never have thought of.

But there is the other side of the picture. How can we attune our soul to take in his divine

music? How would we show our kinship to him? Generally our approach to the great poet is superficial. We prize him for the least valuable elements in his greatness. A few stray songs chosen for their melody not for their inner substance, recitations of his poems, enacting his dances and representing his dramas on the stage, appreciation of his light and gay moods to the exclusion of his deeper intuitions—it is these that constitute for most of us the essence of Rabindranath's appeal. We pluck from the golden bird a few of his bright plumes and think that is all that he has to offer us. But that is not the way in which a great poet, whom we look upon as a national poet and the moulder of our lives and thoughts, is to be taken to heart. We must cleanse and purify our hearts to make them fitting temples for the reception of his influence. We must accept him in his entirety, in all his modes and at all levels of his inspiration. With him spiritual intuitions were a reality and the world was permeated by the spirit of God. He engaged himself in a living and arduous quest to find God and exhorted all of us to lead pure, disciplined and elevated lives. He taught us to rise above all narrow, sectarian thoughts and to realise the essential one-ness of humanity. He crossed national frontiers and habitually breathed the purer air of internationalism. We must live up to his ideals if we are to claim him as a national poet.

Above all he had a special message for a machine age and an industrialised society. His *Raktakarabi* should have a special appeal to those who have to live in factories and handle mechanical instruments. He has warned us against the de-humanising influence of a life absorbed in the accumulation of wealth and an exclusive cultivation of the cult of power. He pleaded for the retention of the human feelings, of love and tenderness, the hopefulness of youth and response to the spell of beauty if men were not to be reduced to mere automatons. He called us back to the green fields, the open sky, the joyous song of the sowing and the harvest and a happy communion with the fresh, unspoiled beauties of Nature. He wanted us to cure our unbridled lust for power, our frenzied efforts to wrest more and more secrets from the womb of nature to add to our material comforts by a faith in those higher

moral values of life which are of perennial importance. The craze for acquisition must be counter-acted by a readiness for renunciation when the call comes. We may accumulate wealth and power only for the collective good of humanity, to share them with all. Above all, we must

not forget the grand, eternal truth of the Upanishads, the message of our Seers and Prophets that life has been given to man only for the seeking and finding of the ultimate truth, for the realisation of God whom no secondary light can obscure.

When I go from here let this be my parting word, that what I have seen is unsurpassable.

I have tasted of the hidden honey of this lotus that expands on the ocean of light, and thus am I blessed—let this be my parting words.

In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of him that is formless.

My whole body and my limbs have thrilled with his touch who is beyond touch, and if the end comes here, let it come—let this be my parting word.

—GITANJALI

Rabindranath's India

ANNADA SANKAR RAY



My father's friend, the late Prafulla Kumar Sarkar, once remarked to me, "Eighteen wounds results from a tiger's touch, you know. Anyone related to a Pirali becomes a Pirali with all his family and all his friends. They remain Piralis forever and ever, not only for one generation."

Wounds made by a tiger do not take long to heal but a Pirali is branded permanently. Century after century has passed but the descendants of Kamdev and Jaydev are still regarded as degraded. Rabindranath was heard to deplore the fact in his old age. The poet had not forgotten nor would society have permitted him to forget if he had been able to do so. His father, Maharshi Devendranath, said laughingly to Aghorenath Chattopadhyay, "You call me Chief Acharya. We have been Chief Acharyas for a long time. The word 'pir' means acharya or *guru* and the word 'ali' means chief or best. As Piralis, we have been Chief Acharyas long enough." Aghorenath was later put in charge of the ashram.

In his biography of Rabindranath, Sri Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay writes, "For various unknown reasons the caste authorities favoured some families contaminated by contact with Muslims and honoured them with high social status while other similar families were branded as 'fallen' and deprived of status. The Pirali Brahmins were among those so stigmatised."

The legend which the biographer records is an insult to the human intelligence. It is difficult to believe that either intelligence or humanity existed in the country at that time. Had these existed two Brahmins who were forced against their will to eat forbidden meat would have not been degraded, together with their relatives and descendants, for all time to come. They could easily have escaped from their unpleasant situation by accepting the Muslim faith. That they did not do so shows a strength of mind which deserves commendation. Century after century

the Piralis have waited patiently, within the pale of Hindu Society, for better sense to prevail and their fallen status to be rescinded.

It is certainly a misfortune to be degraded in social estimation. But misfortune can, by an effort of the will, be converted into good fortune. The Piralis, through their association with the Muslims, acquired a broadness of mind that made it easy for them to become friendly with the British. Their way of thought was liberalised still further through their association with the British. How can those once branded as fallen recover their social status, rising once more in social estimation? The Piralis found the answer to this question in doing business with the British, forming companies jointly with them and founding banks. Landed estates afforded another opportunity to rise. Panchanon Kusari, through his devotion to Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, became Panchanan Thakur or 'Tagore'. It was the fashion at that time for families 'contaminated' by association with the British to anglicise their surnames. Laha became 'Law', Saha became 'Shaw', Datta became 'Dutt'. So it was that Thakur became 'Tagore'. The caste authorities no longer had the courage to brand them as fallen. The Tagores became more respectable than the Thakurs just as Chatterjis became more respectable than Chatujjes, Banerjis more than Banujjes. The British have departed but Bengali periodicals still write 'Mukherji'.

The Tagores were 'contaminated' by contact with Muslims in the first place and by contact with the British in the second. There was not enough water in the Ganges to cleanse Dwarkanath Tagore. Twice he crossed the sea. Nowhere is it recorded that he ate cowdung on his return by way of penance. One who lives on the water is not afraid of a little dew. A family who, for a most minor offence, had been

Piralis for generations, had no cause to be alarmed. How much further down could they be pushed? Dwarkanath had as much strength of mind as Rammohun Roy. And he added to it the strength that comes with wealth. In an exotic city like Calcutta the amount of money people have is more important than their caste. Money is more honoured. A new yardstick of social prestige was introduced into India during the period of British rule. The divisions known as the middle class, the upper class and the lower class were imported in the nineteenth century. Leaving the question as to whether the Tagores were good Brahmins or not to the Brahmins to decide, Calcutta society accepted them as wealthy and aristocratic. They derived even greater distinction from their friendship with the rulers. The story goes that, in the Queen's own country, Dwarkanath was called a 'Prince'.

When Dwarkanath's son, Devendranath, was a young man a loose page of the Isa Upanishad was blown into his hands by a breeze. He thus received the guiding principle of his life by chance. Later he adopted the Brahmo creed. At that time this creed was called *vedantapratipadya dharma*. The name Brahmo was given to it four years later. The Vedas had been regarded as infallible from time immemorial. That superstitious attitude was abandoned. Devendranath had carefully eliminated all traces of image worship from the *shradh* ceremony of his father. Little by little he discontinued all rites associated with the worship of images even though he lived as a member of a very large and very conservative family. A day came when even the services held for the family deity, Lakshmi Janardan, were stopped. After this he took his seat in the pulpit of the Brahmo Samaj and began to act as acharya in his own right. His daughter, Sukumari, was married according to rites purged of all idol worship.

To us today these things seem very simple. But a hundred years ago every step that Devendranath took was revolutionary. Yet he did not sever his connection with Hindu Society. He did not think that should be done. It might be against the popular practice to believe in a single godhead, Brahma, and to disbelieve in a

pantheon of gods and goddesses, but it was not counter to Hinduism. The Brahmo Samaj is a part of Hindu religion. The creed of the Brahmo was the essential core of Hinduism. Devendranath was as sincere a Hindu as he was a Brahmo. At that time Hinduism was being attacked by Christian missionaries. Many were becoming converts to Christianity. Devendranath, by providing an alternative, saved Hinduism as Nanak and Chaitanya had saved it before him.

But he had a mental reservation in respect of one thing. He was a Brahmin no less than he was a Brahmo. Keshab Chandra Sen and others, although they were Brahmos, were not Brahmins. Like him they were Bengalis yet he could not establish ties of kinship with any one but Brahmins. He welcomed kinship with Brahmins even when they were not Bengalis. Girls of his family were married to Brahmins who were not Bengalis but in his lifetime no girl of his family was permitted to marry a Bengali who was not a Brahmin even though the Bengali was a member of the Brahmo Samaj. Then, what did the word 'samaj' mean? In what sense was the Brahmo Samaj a Society? In what sense was Hindu 'Samaj' a Society? Was there another society anywhere in the world in which 'samaj' or society was interpreted in the same way?

Personal cordiality between Devendranath and Keshab Chandra was overshadowed by the conflict between their ideas. Keshab Chandra broke away, taking many other members with him, and formed the Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj. Devendranath's Brahmo Samaj became known from that time on as the Adi Brahmo Samaj. He had already been given the honorific title '*Maharshi*'. No one doubted that he was one who knew Brahma and was filled with His spirit. In religious experience he was the foremost of the Brahmos. But it was difficult for him to approve of the social changes for which most members of the Samaj were impatient. They were eager to assert the independence of women, the right of non-Brahmins to act as ministers, inter caste marriage, equality between the sexes, renunciation of the sacred thread. He was inflexible. The Maharshi did not even approve of the great step forward which

Vidyasagar, working from within Hindu Society and Hindu religion, was able to take. He found his personal solution in travelling in the Himalayas while he was able and spending his later years in remote and immobile eminence in Calcutta.

A cow which has been in a burning barn takes fright thereafter at the sight of a rosy cloud. People who had been penalised once for a trivial reason and branded as 'fallen' would naturally be reluctant to risk degradation or outcasting a second time. But times had changed. Christianity was not the only thing that came from Europe. There were other trends of thought also. The Renaissance, Humanism, the Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the French Revolution, Liberalism, Democracy. Were all these only for Westerners? Were they not also for Indians? For Hindus? For all men? Keshab Chandra Sen and other Brahmo leaders did not wish to forswear Hinduism. All they wanted was to understand their human heritage and keep in step with the times. In the process some excesses may have taken place. But what good would it have done to avoid mistakes by remaining inactive?

Another split occurred in the Brahmo fold. Sivanath Sastri and other Brahmo leaders broke away from Keshab Chandra Sen just as Keshab Chandra Sen had broken away from the Maharshi. The dissidents formed their own group, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Keshab Chandra's group then changed their name to the Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj. The occasion for this separation was the Cooch Bihar wedding. So eager was Keshab Chandra Sen to have his daughter married to the Raja of Cooch Bihar that he could not wait until she attained the minimum age of fourteen. He broke his own rule, explaining his lapse away as a mandate from God. The subsequent split in his following broke his heart. He died not long afterwards.

The Brahmo Samaj then had to come to grips with the revivalist Hindus. Nearly all of them had an English education. Many had crossed the seas and eaten cow dung on their return yet they were more fanatical than ordinary Hindus. According to them India meant Hinduism and Hinduism meant India. All Indians were Hindus and all Hindus Indians. There was no place

in their scheme of things for either Christians or Muslims. Their nationalism was Hindu nationalism, based upon caste and reverence for the past. They believed proudly in idolatry and the doctrine of avatars. They looked upon gurus as incarnate deities or their avatars and worshipped them as such. With pseudo-scientific explanations they justified all evil practices. Attack is the best defence. They sought to defend the Aryan civilisation of India by attacking Western civilisation. There was nothing to be learned from the West except science.

Rabindranath joined the Hindu Revivalists. Unbelievable, but true. Later, in the course of writing *Gora*, he examined his mental state and faithfully depicted it, setting himself free in the process. His complaint was that the Brahmos of the Navavidhan Samaj and the Sadharan Samaj were not as much a part of Hindu society as the Adi Samajists had been. They hesitated to describe themselves as Hindus. When Rabindranath began the writing of *Gora* he was as aggressive Hindu as well as a Brahmo. He had his place in Hindu society just as his ancestors had theirs, the only difference being that he objected to idol worship etc. He refused to leave his place. He set himself to rebut the criticism of foreigners and preachers of other religions and sought to challenge them in their turn. He was not in a mood to spare the Brahmos unless they described themselves as Hindus or if they frequented the opposite camp.

Intimately interwoven with this attitude was his sense of Indian nationhood. By Indian was understood Hindu, by Hindu an Indian. Muslims and Christians were not only beyond the pale of Hinduism, they were beyond the pale of Indianism. But there was a snag. What then was Sister Nivedita? She was not a Hindu nor an Indian by birth yet she could not be called either a non-Hindu or a non-Indian. If she were accepted then neither Hinduism nor Indianness depended upon birth. Any one could become a Hindu, any one could become an Indian. But was that easy? Would the doors of Hindu temples be thrown open to such a person? Or would any one accord him all the rights of Indianness? Where was Nivedita's place? Was her place

where Rabindranath's was ? No, Nivedita's place was not as undisputed as Rabindranath's.

As Rabindranath thought and wrote he came to perceive the truth. In the end he found he could not give Gora the right of Hindu *shradha*. The doors of all Hindu temples were closed to him. Then he found a kind of stability in the refuge of those without a place to go—the Brahmo Samaj—not the Adi Brahmo Samaj. He married a Brahmo girl. Although the poet is not explicit it can be safely assumed that the marriage was performed according to Brahmo rites, under the Civil Marriage Act sponsored by Keshab Chandra Sen. Muslims and Christians had the right of entrance into the two later branches of the Brahmo Samaj. They also could become Brahmos. It was not necessary for them to become Hindus. Were they any the less Indians for that ? Gora was not expelled from India's lap because he did not have a place in an orthodox Hindu home. He remained an Indian. This new definition of India found room for all, accepting everyone, Hindu and non-Hindu alike. No one is rejected. Rabindranath broke away from the Revivalist Hindus.

Gora said, "Mother, you are my mother ! The mother in search of whom I have wandered so far was sitting at home all the time. You have no caste, you make no distinctions, you despise none. You are the image of goodness. You are my India."

"Mother, call your Lachmiya. Tell her to pour me a drink of water."

So it was that Rabindranath discovered the India that was his, the India which has no caste, in which no invidious distinctions are made and none are despised. The India which is the image of pure goodness. In the poetry he wrote subsequently this realisation became clearer and clearer. He called all to "the sea shore of India's great humanity."

"Come, O Aryans, Come, Non-Aryans, Hindus, Muslims, Come, today, come Englishman, Come, Christian, come—" Those who had come before he called them became and remained Indian in the sense that he was.

"Aryans are there, non-Aryans, Dravidians, Chinese, Sakas, Huns, Pathans, Moguls—all merged into one. . . . All exist within me, not one of them is remote. . . . In my blood sings their varied music. . . ."

This vision of India is similar to Arjuna's vision of the world as described in the Gita. It was fitting for one who had beheld this vision to sing :

"Thou callest day after day. Responding to Thy noble summons Come Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsees, Muslims, Christians, the East and the West. A garland of love is woven beside Thy throne. . . ."

The poet's conception of India did not stop with this vision. The West as spoken of in his song was given equal status with the East. The West must come and it must come on equal terms with the East. The West must be accepted, taken to our hearts and made our own. No Westerner is under any obligation to shave his head first or don the saffron robe. He need not become a Hindu or be taught as a Hindu from childhood in a Hindu home. The Westerner shall come as he is. The Englishman shall remain an Englishman, the Christian a Christian. His status will be equal just the same. It does not matter at all if he neither becomes an Indian nor a Hindu nor a Brahmo. He may come. The garland of love shall be threaded together. Visva-Bharati is the name the poet chose for a unity of this kind.

(Translated from the Bengali by Lila Ray).

*He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path maker is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and in shade and his garment is covered with dust...*

Rabindranath and World Literature

REV. FATHER PIERRE FALLON S. J.



RABINDRANATH'S work in the field of education is important ; important also was his role as a national leader and as India's ambassador to the world ; a religious and social thinker, a great musician and painter, the writer of many novels short stories and dramas, a marvellous essayist, Rabindranath was, first and foremost, a *poet*. Leaving to others the task of studying the many facets of his genius, I wish to study him only as a poet. But it would be presumptuous for a foreigner to compete with the very many and excellent Bengali critics who have discussed the various aspects of Rabindranath's poetical work. This poetry is so intimately expressive of the dreams and longings and joys of Bengali life that a non-Bengali must always realize that much escapes him, much remains beyond his reach. I will, therefore, study this poetry only in its relation to other literatures, especially the literatures of the West, and I will attempt to answer one question which has often been asked from me : what is the position of Rabindranath with respect to world literature ? Is he only the greatest poet of a particular nation or is he truly one of the great world poets ?

The majority of Rabindranath's readers, those for whom he primarily wrote, may be astonished, perhaps offended, by such a question. Few poets have received anywhere in the world the nation-wide homage of enthusiastic admiration Tagore has received in Bengal. For Bengal, poetry means Rabindranath's poetry. Bengali children learn the magic of rhythm and the first enchantments of imagination while memorizing his poems ; Bengali youths discover the world through his eyes and their minds are shaped by his lyrics ; people of all ages read and sing and pray Rabindranath's poems. I have seen many a time the trance-like rapture in the eyes of Bengali school-boys and college students or of simple peasants and sophisticated intellec-

tuals suddenly transported by the magic power of Tagore's poems or songs into a world of dream, harmony and beauty. Who among them would ever question the claim of their poet to be one of the greatest poets of the world ?

Foreign readers of Tagore, unable to appreciate his writings in their Bengali original, pore over pale translations and, charmed though they often are by the mystic wistfulness of *Gitanjali* or *The Post-Office*, generally fail to realize the extraordinary greatness and manifoldness of his lyricism. They think of Tagore as of a Sage, a Mystic perhaps, and his poetry is but of secondary interest to them ; his message is for them more important than his art.

Some readers, both Bengali and foreign, more familiar with the trends of modern poetry in the Western world, find Rabindranath's romanticism little attuned to the doubts, anxieties and tormented moods of the men of to-day ; they prefer, at times they judge objectively greater, poets who, desperate and interiorly torn between their longing for Beauty and their realization of universal ugliness, have rejected romanticism and searched, with the Symbolists or the Surrealists, for new poetic techniques and for an art more expressive of their own tragic spiritual experiences.

To form an objective estimate of Rabindranath's greatness as a world poet, one must therefore keep in mind the fact that actual transmissions of his poetic works are generally poor and do not give an adequate idea of what a Bengali critic justly called "his quantity, his immense range, his fabulous variety". One must also adopt a sufficiently vast perspective and abstract from too subjective points of view or narrowly historical circumstances. 'Modernity' does not necessarily constitute greatness ; besides, 'modernity' is a very subjective and relative

notion. The world of Homer and Vyasa is not the same as the world we live in ; Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Racine or Goethe, to be rightly appreciated, must be read in a different perspective from that of our contemporary circumstances. We may find ourselves subjectively more responsive to the poetry of writers closer to us in time, we do not for that reason judge them to be objectively greater. Rabindranath's world, the world of *Galpa-guccha* or the world of *Gora* and *Chhare Baire*, is already for us a distant world, very different from the present-day world of contemporary Bengal ; his poems, most of them at least, were written in an age now definitely bygone. Many critics yet go farther and contend that Rabindranath's poetry is lacking in the tragic depth, the spiritual intensity and the profound humanity which modern readers expect from a truly great poet, ancient or contemporary ; they question the poetical validity of his too serene idealism and of his very vision of man and the universe. Rabindranath, according to them does not possess the 'modernity' which is essential to a truly great world poet, not because he belonged to another historical age but because he ignored the doubts and the despairs of man, because he was too religious or mystical, too olympian, too positively secure in his peaceful contemplation of Beauty. This identification of 'modernity' and poetic greatness with the "experience of the void", with anguish, or the obsession with man's tragic condition amidst a demonic universe, results from a considerably simplified and one-sided understanding of modern literature. As Maritain pointed out in his lectures on 'Creative Intuition in Art & Poetry', "the spiritual experience of modern poetry is double-faced and self-divided ; while determining itself, and this is its grandeur, with respect to the Prime Being, it has here the countenance of the ardour in refusal, there the countenance of the ardour in acceptance". Many great modern poets have 'opted' for the reality of the Absolute : the religious vision of the mature Eliot, the positive acceptance of the world and the cosmic joy of Claudel, the Faith which inspires many of the present-day poets in the West, are not in any way less 'modern' than the desperate dreams of Nerval, the anguished blasphemies of Baudelaire of the rejection of all transcendence by

Mallarmes of *valery*. If Rabindranath therefore fails to be a great world poet such as modern men can fully appreciate, it is not because of his 'acceptance of the world' and of his spiritual 'option' but because of some other artistic limitation or deficiency. But **does** Rabindranath really fail to achieve 'greatness', if his work is examined against the background of great world poetry ? I do not think so.

Rabindranath's *range* is immense : very few poets have given form and beauty to so many moods and feelings. Tagore's poetry is a vast world indeed : from the first astonishments of the child to the carefree and sensuous dreams of adolescence, the deeper passions of manhood, the thirst for the divine, the quiet intoxication caused by Nature's manifold beauty, the other-worldly pensiveness of the sage, the vibrant love of country, the homely enchantments and sufferings of everyday life and the peaceful waiting on death, there are so many and so infinitely varied aspects of Tagore's poetry that every man or child of whatever age finds himself at home in this poetical universe.

Besides this range, Rabindranath's poetry possesses another quality that gives it extraordinary greatness. Tagore's poetry is wonderfully *musical*. Mallarme dreamed of a poetry that would be pure music but most modern poets have lost the secret of those ancient poets who were at once musicians and poets. For Tagore, poetry and music were never separated. A modern bard who sang his own compositions, a Bengali troubadour for whom the lute was as important as the pen, Rabindranath was a musician even before he was a poet. I had read many times his '*Gitanjali*' before I could listen to the music of its songs ; listening, I understood so much more than I had been able to grasp when I was merely reading. This may apply to all great poetry but it applies in a very special manner to the poetry of Tagore. Many poems or lyric dramas of Rabindranath only live when heard in their musical context. This *harmony* is the soul of Tagore's poetry : the whole universe, Nature, man's life and its diverse moods, Tagore approached as a musician searching for and perceiving harmonies infinitely varied and subtle. He has created an extra-ordinary



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number of rhythms and his whole poetic work but a never-ending song, a song that was in turn light and fresh, dreamy, grave and solemn, passionate, mystical and contemplative, but always a song.

Poet whose range was immense and for whom poetry was music, Rabindranath was a great *Romantic*. Too many foreign readers of Rabindranath think only of him as a Mystic and too many contemporary critics are suspicious of all romanticism : But Rabindranath's greatness is first the remarkable greatness of his romanticism ; it is as a romantic poet of extraordinary talent that he must be approached. His '*Manasi*', his '*Chitra*' and '*Sonar Tari*,' the ballads of '*Katha O Kahini*', the world of '*Galpa-gucchha*', the passionate ardour of '*Chitrangada*', his *Barasha* songs and the Nature poems, the larger movement of '*Balaka*', the deeper love of '*Purabi*', make of Rabindranath one of the greatest romantic poets of the world. He has magnificently expressed the yearning after Beauty, the deep communion with Nature, the will to escape far away from the ugliness and arabness of daily life, the joys and melancholies of love ; he has created a world of Beauty where the imaginations and yearnings of man find the most wonderful release and fulfilment.

But this great Romantic had a deeper and greater *vision* than many other romantic poets. His poetry was deepened and widened by his Upanishadic '*Jivana-Darsana*'. Rabindranath may not be as great a philosopher as a Sankara or a Bergson ; he may not be a mystic comparable to the great '*munis*' of the world. But his poetic inspiration was fed on the tradition of the Upanishads and his contemplation went beyond the dazzling spectacle of the finite world. The Upanishadic realization of suprasensual plenitude and joy and Peace and universal oneness gave his poetry a spiritual profundity rarely found in romantic poetry.

It is difficult, on account of Rabindranath's manifold richness, to find any one poet to whom he can be adequately compared. Some great poets have created works greater than any single poetic work of Tagore. Tagore has not composed an Iliad or an Aneid, a Commedia or a Faust ; none of his poetic dramas is equal to the great

dramas of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Calderon or Racine. Yet, Tagore the Poet is inferior to no other poet because of the infinite variety of his poetic creativeness. Among the great romantic poets of the West, few, if any, come near to him. **Victor Hugo**, the greatest romantic poet of France, is, like Tagore, a word magician who wrote poems of a tremendous variety, a master of rhythm and metaphor, who cast into admirable form all the moods of a whole nation but he is definitely not for us what Tagore is for you ; he has moulded our poetry's language, he possessed a luxuriant imagination but he had the philosophy of a sentimental adolescent, he was lacking in taste and measure, his creativeness was but the discovery of beautiful words and sounds.

To 'explain' Tagore in terms of French poetry, one would have to bring in Lamartine with his mellow meditateness, Musset and his vain pursuit of ideal love, Gautier perhaps and his exquisite cult of form, the dreamy musicality of Verlaine, and many more aspects of French lyricism. Would the English Romantics give us one great poet to whom we could compare Tagore ? Shelley, whose influence is visible in the first works of the young Tagore ? Keats, with his more exacting technique and his more objective delineation of Beauty ? Swinburne, supple and sensuous like the author of '*Chitra*' ? Wordsworth, who worshipped Nature in his meditative songs ? Tennyson, whose 'idylls' and ballads remind us of the '*Kathas*' and '*Kahinis*' of Rabindranath ? Tagore has something in common with every one of them but to give a complete idea of his poetry, one should include all of them, together with Spenser, and the Irish Symbolists, and others still. There is only one great Western poet whose work has the range and richness of Tagore's lyric work, and that is the German *Goethe*. In many ways indeed does Goethe present striking similarities with Rabindranath : he was at home in the classical literatures of the West, he had absorbed the spirit of the Minnesingers and Volksingers of his own land, he rediscovered the best of the old traditions of German poetry and went on experimenting endlessly, inventing new metres and lyric forms. Schiller called him a 'native' poet, because every poem of his is the direct

outcome of some personal impulse or emotion but he was also a 'reflective' poet with a deep philosophical bent. His works appeal to all ; children and grown-up's understand and love him ; he is the national poet of his country. His poetry is the refined product of a vast culture but it is not written for a cultured *elite* only ; he is a great humanist and a writer who, without accepting the orthodox religion of his own people, is animated by a profound religiosity. He was in love with the earth, "ein sehr irdischer Mensch" full of that 'Dingfreudigkeit' which was deep joy in the spectacle of the world, serene and recollected tranquillity in communion with Nature. Am I wrong if I say that all these words apply excellently to Rabindranath ?

Having attempted to show that Rabindranath's romanticism makes him one of the great lyric poets of the world, I feel guilty of considerable over-simplification. Labels and neat divisions into pre-existing categories do little justice to a genius so manifold and so spontaneous as that of Rabindranath. Goethe was the greatest German Romantic but he outgrew his own romanticism. And so also did Rabindranath go beyond the limits of romanticism. He renewed himself again and again, he experimented with new techniques ; his later poetry is very different indeed from the earlier poetry of his more romantic period. Some of his dramas are distinctly closer to those of Maeterlinck or the Irish Symbolists than to the romantic plays of his youth. Some of his hymns and songs attain a classical fulness worthy of the greatest classic poets.

There remains one question for me to treat, that of Rabindranath's actual relation to Western poets. How much did his poetry owe to influences from the world outside and how much has he himself influenced writers of other countries ?

Some Bengali critics have affirmed that Rabindranath was primarily a Western poet writing in Bengali ; some others, without going to such ridiculous lengths, have yet emphasised somewhat one-sidedly the European elements in Tagore's poetry. In fact, Rabindranath is the finest representative of that Bengali Renaissance which was occasioned, partly caused,

by the cultural and literary contact established between Bengal and the West in the nineteenth century. He lived in a family which was intimately acquainted with the best art and thought of Europe, belonged to a religious group which had been deeply influenced by Western ideals, from childhood, he knew English and loved English poetry ; he passed in England some of the formative time of his adolescence. And yet Rabindranath borrowed little from foreign models and does not, directly at least, owe much to European masters. *Shelley* and *Keats*, he loved ; he liked Wordsworth, he was at one time influenced by Robert Browning and, nearly as much, by Elizabeth Browning ; he read widely English poetry and many books by Western authors. But it is difficult to point out any one particular author to whom he would have been indebted to any considerable extent. As Hugo is French and Goethe German, so Tagore is Bengali. In the West, at the time of the Renaissance, French and English writers studied the ancient classics and the Italian poets ; Ronsard is not Italian because of his study of Petrarch or Chaucer-unEnglish because of William of Lorris and Boccaccio. But even this kind of outside influence is limited, so it seems, in the case of Rabindranath. He assimilated much, he grew artistically and spiritually because of his contact with the world and its writers, he perhaps freed himself from many fettering conservatisms through his openness and receptivity, but he was the disciple or the follower of no other poet I know of. His romanticism was certainly deepened by his youthful reflections on Dante, Petrarch and Goethe ; Shelley and Keats fired his young mind and heart, and I have already spoken of Browning's influence at one particular period of his poetic work ; much later, he came to know and appreciate the Irish Symbolists ; he had met, and he certainly esteemed, Yeats and Ezra Pound, Robert Bridges and other English poets ; he followed with great interest the developments of the new Bengali poetry and was brought into contact with the more recent poetry of Europe. But Rabindranath's work was little affected, I believe, by these side influences or contacts. After he was fifty, he travelled extensively throughout the world and passed several years on those Journeys meeting many of the best

artists and writers of the world. But the principal purpose of those peregrinations was not the study of the literary and artistic currents in the world but the gathering of sympathies and support for the foundation of Visva-Bharati. At the most, those Journeys were the occasions of new experience and a broadening of Tagore's world outlook. Rabindranath, though in no way isolated from the world's greatest literature, owed little to its influence.

What has been his influence on the literature of the world? His influence on all aspects of Bengali literature is of course immense; I have been told that it was important also on several non-Bengali Indian literatures. Outside India, I know only of one great poet whose work has been deeply influenced by Rabindranath: *Gabriela Mistral*, the South-American poetess; I might add Jimenez, the Spanish poet, though I do not know how far Tagore actually influenced his poetic work. Besides these two major poets of the West, I do not think that Rabindranath has so far inspired or influenced any other important writer of the West. Many reasons could be found to explain this regrettable '*absence*' of

Tagore from the world's literary scene, his absence at least as a life-giving force in the realms of world poetry. The West knows Rabindranath primarily as a Sage; he travelled in the West chiefly as a teacher and philosopher; his great romantic poetry is little known and what is known attracts little because Romanticism has long been in the West a thing of the past. I think that the West and the whole literary world would gain much from a better knowledge of his poetic work and I hope that, at the occasion of this Centenary, new efforts shall be made to convince readers of world literature that the Tagorean world is worth exploring, that there is a manifold richness of harmony and beauty, a wealth of image and rhythms, treasures of unalloyed joy, and a great and lofty vision such as our present-day world stands in sore need of.

On the occasion of this Centenary, I pay my sincerest homage of admiration to the world-poet of Bengal and I thank Almighty God Who has given us, to Bengal and to the world, such a magnificent Witness to the Beauty of His **Creation**.

*Our voyage is begun, Captain, we bow to thee !
 The storm howls and the waves are wicked and wild, but we sail on,
 The menace of danger wails in the way to yield to thee its offerings of pain,
 and a voice in the heart of the tempest cries : "Come to conquer fear !"
 Let us not linger to look back for the laggards, or bemoan the quickening hours with dread and doubt,
 For Thy time is our time and Thy burden is our own
 and life and death are but Thy breath playing upon the eternal sea of life.
 Let us not wear out hearts away picking small help and taking slow count of friends,
 Let us know more than all else that Thou art with us and we are Thine for ever.*

Rabindranath Tagore



Crisis of Clarity

NORMAN COUSINS

Editor—Saturday Review

HERE I see many of the world's common-wealths, men and women who in some cases have been drawn to India from halfway across the earth—drawn by the gravitational pull still exercised by the personality of Rabindranath Tagore! What is the nature of Tagore's spell? Why is it that, decades after his physical death, Tagore continues to excite and inform the imaginations not only of his own countrymen but of men from nations and cultures lying at a considerable distance from the Indian sub-continent?

The answer is not obscure: whoever you are, whatever you are interested in, Tagore has something important to say to you. For Tagore was one of the truly universal men who have walked this earth. In the West he would be regarded as a Renaissance man, for he combined in one person the abundant gifts of poet, dramatist, painter, philosopher, composer and educator.

Which of these gifts has experienced the greatest appeal?

In this decade, I would guess that Tagore's philosophy, if not in greatest demand, at least speaks to the greatest need. For we live in an age moving at jet speed, seemingly to its own demolition.

If it is true that difficult situations call for heroic actions, it is also true that heroic thoughts must precede action. Tagore's philosophy, his attitude, his style, belong to such an heroic world. For no matter how black and bitter the situation, Tagore possessed the gift of seeing things calmly and at their centre—he had that gift of the intellect and the emotions which the American William James once called "crisis clarity."

I would submit that such clarity is in short supply during our present crisis. Indeed, one of the most insidious aspects of that crisis is that—caught within its gravitational field—we have the dangerous illusion that we are thinking with

perfect clarity. It is only when we measure our thinking against that of a universal mind such as Tagore's that we realize with a start of horror how warped and subjective our conclusions may be.

Let me be more concrete. Throughout Tagore's lifetime the British committed outrages in India—outrages which ranged from overt oppression to more subtle forms of exquisite social and psychological torture. Tagore's reaction to these continuing outrages and provocations was most revealing, most meaningful—in ways that far transcend the specific British-Indian confrontation—which it seems to me make Tagore basic reading for today. I will touch on his reactions in just a moment, but the point I want to make now is that Tagore has survived his era intact. True; his social context has fallen to dust, but his principles of social thought and action were so true to the mark, so universal, that I find them indispensable for developing sound attitudes towards the universal crisis of today.

Of course, every era has its crisis, and unfortunately our era has produced a richer and more variegated crop of crisis than perhaps any other in history. So before I make a perhaps presumptuous attempt to apply Tagore's principles to the crisis of our time, I had better outline briefly just which crisis I am talking about.

I am talking about the overarching crisis brought into being by the nuclear bomb and by the existence of hostile, volatile national entities. I am talking of life in a world that can be scorched to a crisp in a matter of seconds, as if a blowtorch were to be applied to a bird's nest.

I hope you will not think it is my intention to harrow you, or to indulge in cold-war politicking, or to insult your intelligence by recounting facts already well-known to you. But I do think it meaningful, indeed essential to the

context in which we meet to remember this city and this countryside, can in a twinkling be melted into nothingness if a man half a world away decides that there is good reason to push a single button.

If a Roman centurion could be materialized with shield and short sword, he would seem a formidable apparition, a veritable death-dealing machine. Yet as I stand here I represent a minimum of 300,000 pounds of the explosive called TNT—that is my share of the explosive power now stored within the nuclear arsenals of my country. There are citizens of other so-called nuclear-club nations who in their persons probably represent an equal quotient of explosive power. Incidentally, those among us who do not belong to the nuclear-club powers need not feel left out of this grisly sharing-out process. An official estimate states that the amount of destructive nuclear power stockpiled in the American arsenal alone is more than enough to account for 20,000 pounds of TNT for every human being now alive! Meanwhile, as I talk to you, the physicists of these nuclear-club nations are busy developing bombs which will raise my destructive quotient and yours even higher. Already the standard large bomb-in-being is of the 20-megaton variety: it contains 1,000 times the destructive power of the bomb that incinerated Hiroshima. This 20-megaton bomb contains more destructive power than a caravan of one million trucks, each carrying 20,000 pounds of TNT. I will spare you and myself any detailed listing of the horrors attendant on the use of such a bomb: the melting down of people, animals and things, and the lingering poisonous effects on the immediate area and on those distant areas in which radioactive fallout comes to earth.

If it is to be found at all, it will be found—I submit—by men and women who are conversant with the living past as well as with the inescapable present, men and women who have profited by their reading of the great minds—among whom I rank Tagore high. I rank him especially high because he served not just India, but bequeathed to us ideas which should prove

most helpful in the search for a form for the human community. Indeed, it is my conviction that Tagore can give us an affirmative answer to the question of whether the human community shall be a battlefield or a neighbourhood.

I came to Tagore first in 1937 through reading a book by Romain Rolland. Among other things, the book contrasted the ideas of Gandhi with those of Tagore, dramatizing the importance of this dualism in awakening India. In some respects this dualism reminded me of the Hamilton-Jefferson controversy in my own country's history, with important elements of the philosophy of each man coming together to create a vital blend. Gandhi approached mankind through India; Tagore approached India through mankind.

In reading Rolland, it was clear to me that Gandhi's teachings and his non-co-operation movement were enriched and invigorated as the result of Tagore's ceaseless prodding on behalf of universalism.

Tagore recognized the danger to the world of yet another purely nationalist movement. He feared that the Gandhi movement might get beyond Gandhi—that the heat generated by non-co-operation could become the fever of a national authoritarianism.

India's problem, as Tagore saw it, was inseparable from the world problem. "No nation can find its own salvation by breaking away from the others. The awakening of India is bound up in the awakening of the world." I can recall now the thrill I felt in reading Tagore's poetic definition of universalism:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head
is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out of the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its
way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-
widening thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my
country awake."

What was happening in India made me feel foolish for having been mired so long in the futi-

lity that was the fashion of my generation. Compared to India's, our problems were as wisps of smoke alongside a thunderhead. And yet, India was moving toward freedom precisely because a philosophy compounded of affirmation, action, compassion, and universalism was giving inspiration and direction to countless millions who were learning to think about the idea of freedom for the first time.

It was natural that the momentum generated by Gandhi and Tagore should carry me back to an appraisal of the American philosophers. It was even more natural, perhaps, that I should begin with Emerson, with whom the Indian thinkers seemed to have such a rich affinity. What formerly had seemed to me in Emerson to be a collection of bland philosophical truisms—something in the lavender tradition—Now came alive with force and distinction.

As in Gandhi and Tagore, there was the vigorous assertion of individual integrity and purpose as a foundation for service to the general welfare. There was the Gandhian disdain in Emerson for conformity and convention: "Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; and posterity seems to follow his steps as a train of clients." Then, in a one-line distillation of the Gandhi and Tagore philosophy, Emerson wrote, "Nothing can give you peace but the triumph of principles." Dozens of others had said it before Emerson; he brought it into rich focus.

Thus, Tagore was that most valuable of thinkers, the one who is not only a reward and a delight in himself, but who also brings the eager mind into phase with other great thinkers. The impetus I had gained in part from Tagore now led me to re-read, re-evaluate, and re-estimate other great American universalist thinkers—Jefferson, Franklin, James, Holmes, and Wilson—who saw their country as a universal, not a national phenomenon.

I wrote of Tagore's style—of his attitude in the face of provocation and outrage. The quality of that attitude is not easy to define. Certainly Tagore was not a mystic in the sense of a man who rises above the struggle by averting his eyes and pretend-

ing it does not exist. On the contrary, Tagore was intensely *engage*, deeply aware of the inequities and bitter deprivations which plagued his times.

He once wrote:—

"It must be admitted on all hands, that the world today belongs to the Europeans. It is their milch cow, and it fills their pain to overflowing. We in the East do nothing but gaze and gape in astonishment while our share of the world's food and wealth rapidly vanishes."

And in a blazing passage, he says:—

"Beyond the bounds of Europe the torch of its civilization was not meant to give light but to start fires. So it happened that that pellets of opium supported by cannon balls were directed at the heart of China, an atrocity the like of which history had not known before, except perhaps in the newly discovered America where European powers in their greed for gold used deceit and violence to destroy the wonderful Malaya people. . . . And everyone is aware of the horrors of European rule in the African province of Congo. . . ."

"Then came the Great War, and a curtain went up, all at once, on the stage of Western history. It was as though a drunken maniac was revealed in all his starkness. . . . This modern eruption was something volcanic, the suppressed criminality freed of the lid of pressure belching forth lava-like, reddening the sky with its glare and consuming the green richness of the earth. . . . Western civilization no longer admits any call to a sense of horror. . . . The very Europe which had once reviled Turkey now openly flaunts fascism.⁴ . . ."

Yet Tagore never indulged himself in the obvious temptation to write Europe off, to condemn it as soulless, materialistic, and barbarous. He urged his countrymen always to look beneath appearances, to condemn what was bad in Europe, but to recognize the good. He warned:—

"To say that Europe does not express the human spirit, merely accumulates material things, is as good as saying that a tree does not express its life through the dead leaves which it sheds. It is the force of life in the tree that makes it shed its leaves, the dead leaves are no sign of its own death. Only life can die at every moment—true death comes when death ceases."

He speaks of the remarkable Europeans who have found their way to India and dedicated their lives to the Country.

"These examples," says Tagore, "are of people whose self-effacement took place under conditions far apart from the familiar ways of their experience. . . . They even had to carve out their own path of sacrifice, since all known paths were forbidden to them. . . . Can anyone derive such amazing strength from a tradition of materialism?"

A cynic alone may say that Europe rules all the world today by its material power. The true source of its strength is undoubtedly spiritual. In no other way can that strength be accounted for."

Time and again, Tagore urged his countrymen to assimilate the best ideals of Europe, not to confuse rejection of its aggressions with rejection of its good points. I would remind you that this was no easy piece of advice. As an Indian who wished to rally his countrymen to the struggle for independence, Tagore might easily have gained recruits by picturing Europeans—and more especially the British—as being, all of them, the brutes and blackguards that large numbers of them certainly were. He did not call for an anti-British vendetta and Tagore was too wide and too generous for this.

We see here Tagore's chief characteristic: he says, know the enemy, resist the enemy, but in so doing see through to his natural goodness with an eye toward reconciliation after the conflict ends. For Tagore, British rule in India was a phase: he saw the task of India as surviving that phase and moving into nationhood with a minimum of lasting hatreds. The present good relations between Britain and India attest the wisdom of this approach. If Tagore, appalled by the excesses of European mastery over Asia, could nonetheless see through his resentments ahead to the day when the dethroned Europeans would be India's friends in the international community, would it not be possible for us—standing as we do on Tagore's shoulders—to discern through the fogs of international suspicion those elements on the world scene which give promise of a peaceful future? Such discernment is not easily arrived at, for as Tagore put it, "The ability to penetrate the guise of the unfamiliar and discover any good behind it is rare."

One of the "positive elements" that Tagore discerned operating behind the facade of British and European hegemony was the power of science. I might say, incidentally, that I am always amused when I talk to people whose ideas about Tagore are derived mainly from a few Sunday-supplement stories about him and from pictures showing a tall prophet with flowing eyes and a flowing beard. Such people tend to think of Tagore rather patronizingly, labelling him as a serene Eastern mystic

who was ignorant of such ugly facts of life as social upheavals and technological advances.

Of course you and I know that this was not at all the case. Tagore was as modern as tomorrow. His universalism embraced the spiritual and the material aspects of life in an integral way.

Reflections of Tagore upon my country were made some decades ago, but I find them penetrating and suggestive; whether any of the elements of his analysis still apply in any of the countries represented here is something I leave to you!

I have been quoting Tagore at length for several reasons: one is that I always enjoy following the play of ideas produced by this exciting and universal mind. Another more pressing reason has been my wish to set the stage for an admittedly risky experiment: with your permission, I'd like to explore the question of how far Tagore's "crisis clarity" is applicable to the crisis of our time. There is, of course, the danger that I will force Tagore's writings into the Procrustean bed of my own preconceptions and make him seem to say the opposite of what he intended. But I trust you will not decide that I have made such an error.

The nuclear bomb and the fact of competing national entities added up to an unprecedented crisis in human affairs. Of course Tagore did not live to see the bomb, but he saw clearly the way science was taking us. He wrote:

"Today science has opened up so many travel routes that geographical barriers have ceased to exist. So many men, and what is more, so many nations are getting together, that the problem of human unity is now more important than ever before. What will unite those whom science is bringing together? The outer forces that can unite lag far behind. It is all too obvious that nations are coming together uniting—and the agony of it afflicts the world today."

This strikes me as a most valuable insight! Decades ago Tagore noted a tendency which has today become the actuality—that is, the countries of the world agglomerating together, clustering in unions that are more mechanical than chemical, and falling apart easily in order to form threatening new regroupings. As Tagore said, "How to be free from arrogant nationalism is to day the chief lesson to be learnt. To-morrow's history will begin with a chapter on internationalism,

and we shall make ourselves unfit for tomorrow if we detain any manners, customs and habits of thought that are unfavourable to internationalism.

Since Tagore wrote these words, the coming together of nations has been speeded by the advent of the United Nations and perhaps by the very threat posed by the nuclear bomb. Perhaps, as he said, the individual Western nations find it difficult to unite because they are not united from within. He says, "Western civilization tries to keep itself free from danger by getting rid of all foreign elements, as we see even today in America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. The reason is that in Western society there is often a grievous want to harmony between the different classes, and those who should be integral parts of the social fabric are often regarded as undesirable burdens. In a society where one's own people are held suspect as potential trouble-makers, there can be no place of refuge for foreigners. . . . There are only two ways open to a country so far as treatment of outsiders is concerned. It can either kill them or turn them out, freeing itself from potential danger, or it can fit them into its own structure and give them a place in its economy. . . . It needs genius to make friends out of adversaries. It is the way of genius to reach deep into minds, to hold minds in the spell of love. . . ."

How are we to create such a spell of love? Not unexpectedly, Tagore the educator recommends elaborate, intensive educational exchanges on a scale not yet seen in the world. Already such exchanges are well underway. In addition, the interchange between scientists, engineers, and other professional men is at an all-time high. Then too, the United Nations has succeeded the relatively important League of Nations. But perhaps most important is Tagore's general exhortation that the governments and the individual citizens of the various countries think through the question of intra-national and international unity. As one who has tried conscientiously to do so, I can only tell you my own conclusions, conclusions which I think were clearly adumbrated in Tagore's writings. I think that what is needed is a Constitutional or Organi-

zational Convention—whatever the name—which will attract the best minds the world can offer, to examine the weaknesses of the existing world structure and to do something about laying a foundation and reinforcing the main beams in order that the structure will not fall of its own weight as now threatens. It is a far bigger problem than the one that faced the Constitution makers of America more than one hundred and fifty years ago, but the stakes and the potential benefits are correspondingly large.

Paradoxically, the biggest obstacle to the sort of world unity sought by Tagore is not the actual formation of a suitable organization—for the United Nations is already an organization-in-being—but the formation of a state of mind among peoples everywhere which will at least permit the attempt to be made. In my country—as in others—there is a reluctance to admit the fundamental and trite reality that time does not stand still and that changes have accompanied the passing of time, which, whether the idea appeals to us or not, have demanded for our own self-preservation that we make the best of them rather than the worst. If the world has become an association—even admitting that it is a disunited, dispersed association—it will do us no good to claim we do not belong, unless, of course, we are prepared to say that we do not belong to the world either.

It seems to me that my own country has a vested interest in the holding of such a world convention. For America has been a prime laboratory for the new world order. And a convention of the best minds to be found on the earth can borrow from the history and experiences of America just as the Founding Fathers of America borrowed from the laboratory of the Greek world. And if it was true that America one hundred years ago could not exist half-slave and half-free, it is equally true of the world today. Such a convention could not impose democracy on the world—democracy is no exterior garment to be made to order; it cannot be imposed from without. But the convention could at least present to the world's people the case for democracy's three E's: Education, Enlightenment, and Evolution.

This is my extrapolation from Tagore's writings. The appalling threat of nuclear war, the

population explosion, the irresistible tendency of science to make the world either a neighbourhood or a battlefield—I think that all these phenomena would lead Tagore, if he were alive today, to call for a convention of our finest minds, a convention at which a new and higher sort of world order would be discussed, with the world's population as rapt auditors. Perhaps I would have supported the idea of such a convention if I had never read Tagore, but I can assure you that the encouragement implicitly afforded me by

the “crisis clarity” of that universal mind has warmed my heart and firmed my resolve. Indeed, I suppose I can do no better than to end these remarks by quoting a passage from Tagore which has always buoyed me up when people protested to me that the world nations are so disparate that they will never agree on general principles. Tagore's words on this subject were : “*I cannot at all admit that there can be anything in man's higher life which is only good in a particular geographical latitude.*”

THE LAST POEM

*Thou have covered the path of your creation
in a mesh of varied wiles
Then Guileful One,
Deftly have you set a snare of false beliefs
in artless lives.*

*With your deceit
you have left your mark on Greatness
taking away from him the secrecy of night
The path your star lights for him
is the translucent path of his heart
ever illumined by a simple faith.*

*Thou tortuous outside it is straight within
that is his pride.*

*Though men call him false,
in the depth of his heart he finds truth
washed clean by the inner light.*

*Nothing can cheat him ;
he carries to his treasure-house
his last reward*

*He who carefully could bear your wile,
receives from your hands
the right to everlasting peace.*

Calcutta,
July, 30, 1941
9.30 a.m.

Rabindranath Tagore



Rabindranath

A CENTENARY ESTIMATE

DR. SUBODH CHANDRA SENGUPTA

WHEN celebrating the centenary of the Poet's birth, our minds naturally go back a hundred years and make a survey of the environment in which he first saw the light of day in May 1861. It was more than a hundred years after Plassey ; English domination had been firmly established in India, and Western cultural and social ideas were steadily permeating all strata of Indian society. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Ram Mohon Roy started an agitation against the foundation of a Government Sanskrit College on the ground that such a movement would be retrograde for it would only re-vitalize old superstitions and outworn modes of thought. The Hindu College was started in 1817 with the avowed object of spreading the knowledge of Western Science and Philosophy. The three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were established in 1857, and Anglicism seemed to be in full swing. But there had been murmurs of discontent, and the rumblings of an open revolt were heard in 1857, the year of the foundation of the Universities. It was partly a Mutiny of the rank and file, Sepoys, as these common soldiers, were popularly called. It was partly a War of Independence, not only against English rule but also against Western encroachment on Indian social, cultural and religious life. And it is not without significance that the Sepoys rose in rebellion not against military or political domination but to protest against an innovation that gave offence to their religious susceptibilities.

The Mutiny was quelled, but the cultural war continued and its chief exponent in Bengal, and possibly in the whole of India was the first graduate of the Universities of Calcutta—Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. His message was—*Bande Mataram* : Bow to the Mother and also come back to her. This was largely the message of Vivekananda too, and this was the beacon that guided Shri Aurobindo, at least in the Swadeshi days. It is also interesting that when Iswar

Chandra Vidyasagar, an austere Pandit of the orthodox type, strove for the dissemination of Western culture, for female education and widow re-marriage Bankim Chandra drew vivid pictures of the evils of a widow's love and sex hunger and held forth the human appeal of Lord Krishna's activities.

It was in the midst of the conflict of two cultures that Rabindranath was born, and it is part of the enduring appeal of his work in poetry and prose that—here the East and the West have found their aesthetic and philosophical synthesis. No poet has sung more fully of the fullness of life, its infinite variety and its inexhaustible sweetness. The English *Gitanjali* contains only one hundred and three lyrics and yet Western readers found in it something which they would find nowhere else. The painter Rothenstein and the poet Yeats went into ecstasies, and A.C. Bradley, possibly the greatest critic of the Century, expressed himself briefly, but pointedly, 'It looks as though we had a major poet once again'. Here they saw a mystic who is keenly alive to the beauties of nature, a lover who looks upon the human as divine and the divine as human, a *Rishi* who seeks deliverance not through renunciation but in the midst of the very fetters that bind him to the earth.

This sense of the fullness of life is seen in the concept of Archetypal Beauty presented by him in *Urvashi*. It is so similar to and yet so different from the Vision of Beauty presented by English romantic poets. The *Urvashi* of the poet's imagination cannot be viewed under any well-known category. Not a mother, not a daughter, not a wife ; yet she is the Life of Life that enkindles whatever is beautiful on earth. She is not a formless essence or an abstract principle but' sensuous and vital, she is Ceres and Venus in one. In the ancient legend which serves as the frame-work of this great poem, she is a

celestial dancer and a celestial sweet heart. But in Rabindranath's poem she is the cosmic Spirit of Beauty and the earth awakens to life and loveliness to keep rhythm with her divine dance. There is not only infinite majesty but also infinite pity, for the Earth weeps with the beauty she awakens ; she herself has gone away, never again to emerge from the sea, fresh and yet full-formed. No poet has written more rapturously of the beauties of the various seasons—from the stark and bare majesty of Indian Summer to the varied richness of Spring who leaves the imprint of his songs on the very dust of the earth. Yet these beauties are not isolated fragments, not even mere beauties but the rhythmic movements of the Divine Dancer, *Nataraja*, who is the god of creation as well as of destruction. A mystic with his eye turned upwards, he has sung of bliss which is transcendental. But man's body is a divine drink which God relishes more than nectar, and the hero of the poem *Farewell to Heaven* pines for the earth, because Heaven is devoid of earth's richness, its eternal passion and eternal pain, an empty place, possibly suitable only for Shavian Ancients. The reference to show may be illuminating. Rabindranath is not a mere poet of ideas, but a poet who sings of the variety and fullness of life which has more things than ever philosophy dreamt of. In his poetry ideas and emotions and sensuous perceptions are fused into a concrete unity. His hand is in the heavens but his feet are firmly planted on the earth.

There were two literary traditions by which he was deeply influenced and which he transformed in his own characteristic manner. He himself acknowledged his debt to Bengali *Vaishnava* poetry and his affiliations to English romantic poetry have often been stressed. *Vaishnava* poetry is remarkable for its richness, intensity and poignancy, but it looks upon the divine as immanent whereas for Rabindranath God is at the same immanent and transcendent, at once far off and near. This gives a largeness and depth to his poetry beyond the range of *Vaishnava* lyricism. On the other hand, although a dreamer of dreams, he has a perception of the concrete realities of the earth of which we have only rare glimpses in English romantic literature. That is why he is both a novelist and a poet, and his short stories which are redolent of the earth are

as characteristic of his genius as his ineffable lyrics. The epithet "Sensuous mystic" ; often wrongly applied to Keats, correctly describes Tagore. He is of the earth, earthy ; but he always looks beyond earthly beauties to *Urvashi* and *Nataraja*, to God who beyond the network of joy and sorrow woven by him.

Our admiration and love for the great poet and thinker should not, however make us blind to his limitations. He had to pay the price for the largeness of his Vision and the spontaneity of his inspiration. He looks upon life as a blending of various colours rather than as a reconciliation of opposites. That is why his poetry lacks tension and gives an imperfect picture of evil. Or, in other words, his genius is lyrical rather than dramatic. The nearest he comes to a portraiture of evil is in *Sandip* in *At Home and the World*, but the evil in *Sandip* is more theatrical posturing than elemental malignity such as we have in Iago or Goneril. It may also be due to his imperfect realization of the difference between the normal and the abnormal that his humour never reached the height of Cervantes and Shakespeare and his wit has not the sparkle of Shaw's.

But no author had a more comprehensive genius than Tagore and no writer touched life at so many points as he did. He was at the van of the *Swadeshi* agitation, but for him nationalism meant self-realization and the opening of the mind to wider horizons. So when *Swadeshi* was tagged on to boycott, he parted company. That is again the reason that he could never accept the cult of non-co-operation and the *Charka*, because it meant rejection, negation, a process of cramping the soul. He admired Western science and had a good word for the achievements of the Russian Revolution, but no body more pointedly exposed the dangerous potentialities of scientific culture when it is a moral, and he showed also how the steam-roller of materialism call it dialectical or mechanical, is crushing the spirit. This cosmopolitanism or universality is reflected in his educational experiments, too. It is not merely that men of all races would gather at one seat of learning, which will become a nest for singing birds of all places, but the mind should develop like a multipoliate rose, through books certainly,

but also through dance and drama, through music and painting, above all, through contact with Nature.

No poet had a more larger vision of humanity or a richer réalisation of the soul's longing for the Infinite and the Eternal. The *Tajmahal* is a wonderful work of art, but more wonderful is the artist, the Emperor-Poet who has left his work on the earth and wandering in regions where art has no access: Great as your glory is, you are greater than your glory, O Emperor-Poet; one compares some of the most beautiful lyrics in *Smaran* (Remembrance; Eulogise on his dead wife) with Brownings *prospice*, a great poem commemorating Elizabeth Barrett Browning, one sees the difference. Rabindranath has no sense of a fight or a struggle, but he hopes that somewhere on empyrean heights his sweet heart must be storing and also scattering. That sweetness which was her when she was alive on the earth. The lost songs of the earth—should the poet search for them in the golden clouds of the sunset? If we look for his most characteristic creation in his novels, it is not certainly *Sandip* or *Amit* or even *Gora*, but *Satish* in *Four Chapters* (or, *Satish* in *Chaturanga*), who made experiments with a atheistic Positivism or Benthamite Utilitarianism and also with *Vaishnavite* religion of *Lila* and found both atheism and theistic *Lila* equally unsatisfying and went out on a mysterious quest of the Infinite.

But *Satish* represents the journey of the soul in its penultimate stage. He does not see—although *Damini* pointedly reminds him—that the infinite is to be found in the finite, that *rasa* or *lila* is empty of content if it abjures human contact. That is why he fails to understand both *Nanibala* and *Damini*; he does not realize that the mystery of human life is its essential humanity—nor a cult or a philosophy or even a quest. That is the message of Rabindranath's poetry and his short stories, the true characteristic products of his genius which expressed itself in so many—in life and in art. The realization of the Infinite comes to the poor, frustrated schoolmaster one night when, in the face of a terrible flood, he stands side by side with *Surabala*, who might have been his wife, if he only wished it once upon a time, but now belongs to somebody and is, like Lamb's Alice W-n, lost to him for ever.

The Moslem Princes, who fell in love with *Keshaval*, has not even a moment's glimpse of such bliss, but that does not take away from the intensity of her emotion and the loftiness of her longing. In some of the greatest of Tagore's stories there is a wonderful combination of commonness and uncommonness. The *Kabuliwallah* arouses a feeling of alienness not unmixed with disgust, but it is revealed that he is capable of the loftiest human sentiment. The way in which Rabindranath tells the story not only transforms a dirty and half ferocious *Kabuliwallah* but also transfigures the common emotion of parental love. Nothing can be more drab than the life of a village Postmaster, particularly in the waterlogged areas of East Bengal. But Rabindranath has revealed in this unpoetical environment the possibilities of the richest human relationship, not love which is narrow because it is too personal, but sympathy, the yearning of one human soul for nearness to another. At the other extreme, we have such stories as *Hungry Stones*, where the surroundings are magnificently uncommon. But there the commonest human emotion has penetrated to the very marble of which a royal palace was made. The inhabitants have gone into oblivion, even their memory has become dim, but brick and marble palpitates with unseen life. Such a story reveals the persistence of common human beings in uncommon environments just as the *Kabuliwallah* and the *Postmaster* unfold the uncommonness of what seems to be common place.

Rabindranath's concept of art and poetry is as distinctive as the work he produced. Man in his daily life is engaged in his economic and political and social activities. He struggles to preserve himself, to compete with others and to get on. But these activities do not exhaust his energies and they only touch the surface of his self. He has surplus energies which emanate from the deepest layer of his being and it is there that he is a creator and an artist. It is there that like the Divine Creator he is full of *Lila*. And it is this *Lila* that bridges the gulf separating one individual from another and makes us realize the essential oneness of humanity. That is the Religion of Man. *Sahitya*, the synonym for literature, originally meant the *togetherness* of words

and meanings. But Rabindranath says that really it means the togetherness or unity of man and man, across the gulfs of time and space. And if, in a strife-torn world, we can realize the essen-

tial oneness of man, the richness and variety of life, the primacy of spirit over matter, we shall pay the right tribute to the greatest poet of this Century—and of many centuries before and after.

A PRAYER

.

This is my prayer

My prayer to Thee ;

That ere I go I may learn

Why the green Earth

Lifting her eyes to the sky,
called me to her ;

Why the silence of the Night

Told me of the stars

Why the day's glory

Raised waves in my Soul

This is my prayer to Thee.

When Earth's revolutions

For me are ended,

In the finishing of my song

Let me pause a moment,

That I may feel my basket

With the flowers and fruits of

the Six-seasons ;

That in the light of this life

I may see Thee in going,

That I may garland Thee in going

With the Garland from my own throat—

When Earth's revolutions for me are ended,

This is my prayer to Thee

Rabindranath Tagore



Tagore : His Philosophy of Life

DR. SAROJ KUMAR DAS

It is perhaps too late in the day to learn that Philosophy is but Life brought to the focus of self-consciousness. Better still to learn in the company of Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher of the Existentialist School: "we live forwards but understand backwards". Needless to say that the derivative meaning of the term "reflection" points in the direction. As a case in point reference may be made to the fact of contemporary history that we have lived—rather we have been rushed through the first half of the twentieth century which has to its credit or discredit, two world wars within the short span of twenty-five years only. Emerging as we do, from the second world-war and preparing in all probability for the third we step into the new world—order inaugurated by the Atomic Bomb and the inevitable shiftings of the radio-active dust that follow in its train. With our vision blurred, we lose heart and grope from blunder to blunder. But let us not forget that it is we who first raise the dust and then complain that we cannot see. We should, however, brace ourselves up with the assurance that all the greatest epics of the world, from the Heroic to this Atomic age of ours, have followed in the wake of titanic wars, and the cultural life of man, in its varied aspects, has always been re-enthroned thereafter in its epic grandeur.

It is in the fitness of things that we should hail, in this context of the world situation and its time perspective, Rabindranath Tagore's Philosophy of Life which has ever been from first to last, the typical product of a sustained effort, to see life steadily and see it whole. If philosophers are, as Plato believed "the spectators of all time and all existence", commissioned to see in the time "the morning image of eter-

nity", Tagore is, assuredly, the classical model of such philosopher-seers. Attuned hereto is the testimony of the poet-seer Sri Aurobindo Ghosh who characterised Tagore's work as one that has served "to create a new and deeper manner of seeing life, to build bridges of visioned light and rhythm between the infinite and eternal and the mind and soul and life of man". Such a sense of life must, and does in fact "reveal itself to the greatening mind of humanity now that mind is growing in world-knowledge and towards self-knowledge."¹

This apprisement of Tagore's philosophy of life appears to have been confirmed by a veiled reference to that "heaven of freedom" (in the sacramental lyric No. 35 of *Gitanjali* :

Where words come out from the depth of
truth,

Where tireless striving stretches its arms
towards perfection

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost
its way into the dreary desert sand of
dead habit.

Admittedly, his words that come out of the depth of truth² are soaked in emotions and saturated with feelings of worth and, as such, they score a universality of appeal. So did Carlyle too testify, "all deep things are songs"³.

In strict loyalty to the Religion of an Artist that he is par excellence, Tagore confides the secret of his art in his inimitable language: "I am not, I hope, boasting when I confess to my gift of poesy, an instrument of expression delicately responsive to the breath that comes from depth of feeling"². For, Art is nothing but "the response of man's creative soul to the call of the Real. Accordingly, he says "My religion is essentially a poet's religion.

1. Golden Book of Tagore, p. 92.

2. The Religion of an Artist (Reprint from "Contemporary Indian Philosophy 1936).

3. The Religion of Man, p. 139.

7. *The Religion of an Artist*, pp. 1-2.

cutting himself a drift from traditional moorings of thought and culture,—of Upanishadic thought in particular. It is known far and wide from the testimony of the poet himself that the earliest inspiration of his spiritual life—in all its aspects ethical, aesthetic and religious or devotional—was derived from the texts of the Upanishads in the context and with the commentary, of individual lives, of which the saintly life of his father, the Maharshi, was the prototype. The seminal influence thus implanted in the seed-plot of a poetic genius did fully fructify in the way in which it was destined to do, serving both as the law and impulse of its prolific creations.

From a slightly different angle but in essential agreement herewith, Ernest Rhys, to whom the poet had dedicated his *Sadhana* recorded⁸ his enlightened testimony that “in Tagore you feel the humanity that was in the son of Man, comforting the children of light in their awe of the Eternal. In him the spirits of the Upanishads reach the same threshold. It was natural that out of a living belief in the beauty of the earth in Sun and stars and in the waters below there should grow a living faith such as Rabindranath Tagore has expounded in the *Sadhana*. The test of its truth for him is that, living by it, and dowered by Nature to enjoy life to the full, he has found the medicine to heal the troubles of his own day”. Herein the felicitous expression of “the test of truth” in “living by it” makes its ready appeal to the Eastern mind; but, strictly speaking, in the Republic of Letters, there is no point in the distinction between the Eastern and the Western; for, Truth has, after all, no geography of its own. As a case in point reference may be made to another kindred soul of the West, the late Dr. L. P. Facks (of the Hibbert Journal & Principal, New Manchester College, Oxford) who had to his credit a priceless gift of philosophic discernment in the dictum that the end of all wisdom envisaged by philosophy is not to know, nor to think nor even to mean Reality but to live our way into Reality.”

When all is said and done, the fact remains that it is unflinching loyalty to the working of the power of Idea—once phrased by Edward Caird and quoted approvingly, by Tagore—which has invested Tagore's pronouncements with an authority and dignity all their own. It has made his knowledge exalted into vision, his thought matured to inspiration. On such heights alone do Poetry and Philosophy come together to celebrate ‘the wedding of the intellect to this goodly universe in love and holy passion’, with the highest of Imagination, officiating as ‘Reason in its most exalted mood’ in tune with the liturgy of poetry as the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge’.

Along this line of approach we are persuaded to believe with Yeats (the sponsor of the *Gitanjali* to the Western world), the Irish poet of Nobel Laureateship fame, that “whatever of philosophy has been made permanent is alone poetry”. As a matter of fact, a philosophic doctrine, worth, the name, must be the outcome of a vision or a synoptic view of the world as a whole. It is that vision, therefore, that counts (as William James, the American pragmatist philosopher once remarked) with every philosopher, be he a monist or a pluralist an idealist or a realist.

However paradoxical it may sound in the force of Plato's banishment of the poets from his ideal Republic, it is none the less true that Plato was primarily and temperamentally a “poet” (in the wider sense of the term of course) and a philosopher by profession and practice. When, therefore, he was ordaining the exile of the poets from the ideal republic, he did not realise—such was the irony of the situation—that he was signing the warrant of his own extradition from the Ideal State. Truly, it is Plato the poet that conceived or had the vision of a world of Ideas or archetypes: it is Plato, the philosopher, that sought to justify the vision with reference to the things of sensible experience. That is exactly the reason why the Platonic vision of a world of Ideas has come to be reckoned as a classical inheritance

8. Golden Book of Tagore, p. 212.

ষাট বছর
TAGORE AT SIXTY

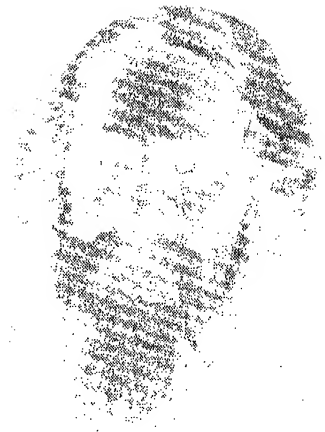


চৌষট্টি বছর
TAGORE AT SIXTY-FOUR



জার্মানিতে (১৯৩০)

TAGORE IN GERMANY (1930)



জার্মানিতে (১৯২৬)

TAGORE IN GERMANY (1926)

for the whole of mankind, while his teachings about fixed stars or future retribution have become matters of antiquarian research. Suffice it to round off the discussion with Dr. Radhakrishnan's concluding reflection in relation to the "Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore" that a poet is nothing if he is not a philosopher. A true poet will be a philosopher and a true philosopher a poet". All the same it is true that "if Rabindranath has touched Indian hearts it is because he is first and foremost a poet and not a philosopher"⁹.

In strict keeping with this line of thought appeared the obituary notice from the pen of the Editor of *Modern Review* (who was *pro tempore* the Editor of the Golden Book of Tagore) in words that would bear quotation *in extenso*: "In philosophy he is not a system-builder. He has been acclaimed as a *Vedantist*. He is of the line of our ancient religio-philosophical teachers whose religion and philosophy are fused components of one whole. His position as a philosophical thinker was recognised by his selection to preside and deliver the presidential address at the First Indian Philosophical Congress in 1925 and also when he was asked to deliver the Hibbert Lectures which appeared subsequently as the "*Religion of Man*".

Having had a first-hand experience of what transpired behind the screen in the matter of this 'selection' of the poet for the Presidentship in question, I should like to reproduce a brief account here.¹⁰ For this purpose I had the privilege of conducting Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, (then) George V Professor of Philosophy in Calcutta University and the Chairman *ex-officio* of the Working Committee for the inaugural session of the Indian Philosophical Congress. On the procurement of his assent to this offer of Presidentship, Prof. Radhakrishnan utilised the occasion for a heart-to-heart talk on the course of Indian Philosophical thought. Being in the venerable position of the listening third of that exalted company I could follow up in detail the track of the

dialogue which then proceeded on a high level. A brief transcript of the dialogue may prove serviceable in appraising the poet's outlook on "Philosophy of our People":

"S.R.—It is not rather strange Dr. Tagore, that the creative urge of Indian thought suddenly lost its vital flow and survived only in the shape of commentaries in the history of Indian thought and culture?

"R.T.—It is really as you say, Professor, a phenomenon and calls for an explanation. My own feeling in the matter is that the philosophical genius of our race, though ceasing at times to express itself in cut-and-dried systems of thought, never lapsed from its vital function.

"S.R.—What you mean to say is that the vital current of philosophic thought was switched off into new channels of self-expression.

"R.T.—Exactly. Forsaking the high-roads of expression and advance, the creative thought of India filtered down to the mass-mind, fertilising it and fulfilling its own mission, in an unexpected manner. I wonder if you have ever gone through the philosophical fragments and devotional lyrics of Kabir, Dada, Rajjab as also of the *Bauls* of medieval Bengal, collected and published from time to time by my friend, Pandit Kashitimohan Sen Sastri. These may not be quite in accord with the canons of philosophical orthodox, but they reveal nevertheless the historic continuity of the philosophico-religious culture of India."

This trend of the dialogue came in for further explanation and confirmation in the historic address by Dr. Tagore on the "Philosophy of our

9. The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, Chap. III sec. 8.

10. Adapted from the present writer's article "Rabindranath and the Philosophy of our People" in *Modern Review*, January, 1942.

People" of which the relevant portion runs to this effect :

"Plato as a philosopher decreed the banishment of poets from his Ideal Republic. But in India philosophy ever sought alliance with poetry, because its mission was to occupy the people's life and not merely the learned seclusion of scholarship, and, on intimate contact with people at large we do realise how philosophy has permeated the life of the people in India...how it has sunk deep into the sub-conscious mind of the country". The line of argument employed here recalls its parallel, drawn upon by Max Muller in his characterisation of *Vedanta* as "the native philosophy of India", backed by the statement "that with the Hindus, the fundamental ideas of the *Vedanta* have pervaded the whole of their literature, have leavened the whole of their language and form to the present day the common property of the people at large."¹¹. As a matter of fact the literature of a people is just the medium for the democratization of the aristocratic achievements of its representative men. And in the selection of the word 'people' in this context, Tagore may have been drawn by an elective affinity towards Browning's exalted usage of the term—

"A people is but the attempt of many
To rise to the completer life of one"

(*"Luria"*).

Whatever the construction we now put upon it, there is no denying the fact that the pledge of the title stood fully redeemed—with a fulness of meaning and wealth of soulful utterances and songs that could have emanated only from a poet-seer of Tagore's eminence. Although the address is superb in conception and superb in diction, it is too apt to fall flat on academic philosophy mongers who always go sniffing for systems, home-grown or imported in a performance of this kind. If, as Whitehead has put it, all systems must be regarded as transitory, true intrusions serving as a treasure for ever Tagore's address

on the 'Philosophy of our people' has unquestionably achieved the high-water mark in the artistry of truth.

The address naturally gravitates towards the "idea of *mukti*, based upon metaphysics" which "has affected our life in India, touched the spring of our emotions, and supplications for soar heavenward on the wings of poesy". It behoves us to know "that there is no external means of taking freedom by the throat. It is the inward process of losing ourselves that leads us to it. Bondage in all its forms has its stronghold in the inner self and not in the outside world ; it is in the dimming of our consciousness, in the narrowing of our perspective, in the wrong valuation of things". As in the material world, even so in the social or political field, the back of freedom is based upon the spirit of alienation on the imperfect realisation of *advaitam*. There our bondage is in the "tortured link of union". Nevertheless, we should know that, though it may sound paradoxical, it is true that in the human world only a perfect arrangement of interdependence gives rise to freedom", and in this wise "the history of the growth of freedom is the history of the perfection of human relationship." The poet-philosopher proceeds, then, to close finally "with a *Baul* song, over a century old, in which the poet sings of the eternal bond of union between the infinite and the finite soul, from which there can be no *mukti*, because it is an inter-relation which makes truth complete, because love is ultimate, because absolute independence is the blankness of utter sterility. The song runs thus :

"It goes on blossoming for ages, the soul-lotus, in which I am bound, as well as thou, without escape. There is no end to the opening of its petals, and the honey in it has so much sweetness that thou, like an enchanted bee, can never desert it, and therefore thou art bound, and I am, and *mukti* is nowhere"¹².

In the context of his idea of *Mukti* or Spiritual freedom is best understood his idea of

11. The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 151.

12. Reproduced, with elisions, from the original publication of the address in *Calcutta Review* (Special Number) 1926, pp. 18, 21, 23, 26, 27. Also reproduced in part from the chapter on "Spiritual Freedom" in the "Religion of Man".

Creation (which, in ultimate analysis means "the World of Personality") along with his idea of Humanism, in studied avoidance of the errors and aberrations of "Nationalism." "What I mean by personality" says Tagore "is a self-conscious principle of transcendental unity within man which comprehends all the details of facts that are individual his in knowledge and feeling wish and will and work. In its negative aspect it is limited to the individual separateness, while in its positive aspect it ever extends itself in the infinite through the increase of its knowledge love and activities"¹³. Thus is it that "we can make truth ours by actively modulating its inter-relations. This is the work of art ; for reality is not based in the substance of things but in the principal of relationship"¹⁴. Nevertheless, the relational world of ours is not arbitrary. It is individual, yet it is universal. My world is mine, its element is my mind, yet it is not wholly unlike your world. There it is not in my own individual personality that this reality is contained, but in an infinite personality¹⁵". What is needed here is the redemptive grace of the poet's vision to see right across—

“Man, proud man, drest in a little brief
authority
 Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
 His glassy essence”—

"the Supreme Person" the idea of the humanity of our God or the divinity of Man the Eternal."¹⁶ whom to know has been the one cry of the personal man.

As a matter of fact this is the very theme of his concept of *Jeevan-Devata*, re-appearing, in all, the glory and consecration of the poet-seer's life-long devotion, in the *Religion of Man*. In his *Broken Ties*, he dwells upon the theme with his characteristic sweet reasonableness thus "If I keep going in the same direction along which He comes to me, then I shall be going further and further away from Him. If I proceed in the opposite direction, then only can we meet. He loves form, so He is continually descending towards form. We cannot live by form alone, so

we must ascend towards His formlessness. He is free so his play is within bonds. We are bound, so we find our joy in freedom. All our sorrow is because we cannot understand this. He who sings, proceeds from his joy to the tune ; he who hears, from the tune to joy. One comes from freedom into bondage, the other goes from bondage into freedom ; only thus can they have their communion”.

It is against this background that we have to understand if at all, the virtue and extravagance of the "Nation" with its emergent evolutive of "Nationalism". As early as period (1895-98) Tagore raised his voice of warning against the impending "crisis of civilization" with its faith pinned to 'the Nation'. "The Nation" is, to quote his very words, "the organized self-interest of a people where it is least human and least spiritual. The spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of Western nationalism; its basis is not in social co-operation. It has evolved a perfect organization of power, but not of spiritual idealism". As a rule, the Westerns bow down before this false God—that dominant intellectual abstraction which you call a 'nation' ¹. Thus is it that all systems produce evil when the psychology which is at the root of them goes wrong. Says Tagore "therefore I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly and act rightly thus becoming the channels of moral truth." About 1925-26 on a lecturing tour abroad Tagore proclaimed thus his faith in no uncertain terms. With recurrent emphasis he has preached his *credo* in unqualified terms: "I believe in life only when it is progressive, and in progress, only when it is in harmony with life. I preach the freedom of man from the servitude of the fetish of hugeness, the non-human. I refuse to be styled an enemy of enlightenment, because I do stand on the side of Jack the human, who defies the big, the gross and wins victory at the end". Following consistently the lead of his own logic of inspiration he preaches in his "Interpretation of Indian History",

¹³. The Religion of Man p. 119.

14. Op. cit p. 134.

15. Personality, p. 58.

16. Op. cit., p. 69.

16. Nationalism, pp. 83-4.

17. Modern Review, Sept. 1917, pp. 231. "The Shalt Obey (*Kartar ichatar Karma*,

the redemptive gospel thus : "We shall realise that only through the development of racial individuality can we truly attain to universality, and only in the light of the spirit of universality can we perfect individuality".

At the furthest reach of this line of thought was vouchsafed the swan song, the words of which will go on reverberating down the corridor of time that makes history.

"The wakeful ageless God of India calls today on our soul—the soul that is measureless, the soul that is undefeated, the soul that is destined to immortality and yet the soul which lies today in the dust, humbled by external authority, in the fetters of blind observance. With blow upon blow, pang upon pang, does He call upon it "*atmanam viddhi*". Know thyself—All the world over the spirit of freedom is awake. But where is India? Can she alone remain unshaken by passion which is so universal in its power over men? Rise India, Break up the spell of old tradition cut off the meshes of despotism and return to the ancient though despised ideals of spirit and liberty....

"The day is come

But where is India?

Strike thy blow at her self-suspicion and
despair

Save her from the dread of her pursuing
Shadow, O Lord, ever awake"¹⁸.

It will be appropriate to close on the high-pitched key on which Dr. Radhakrishnan had struck the chord of "the Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore" more than four decades ago : "In interpreting the Indian ideal of philosophy, religion, and art, of which his work is the outcome and expression. We do not know whether it is Rabindranath's own heart or the heart of India that is beating here. In his work India finds the lost word she was seeking."¹⁹. Just about this time the poet wrote in sympathetic response, as it were the line that still vibrates in a pathos—laden strain, evoking thereby "Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears".

"I shall be born in India again and again : with all her poverty misery and wretchedness I love India best".

18. Preface to the *Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*.

19. *Modern Review*, February, 1917.

*In front lies the ocean of peace
Launch the Boat, Helmsman,
You will be the comrade ever,
Take O take him in your lap,
In the path of the infant
Will shine the 'Dhruva Tara'.*

*Given of Freedom, your forgiveness, your mercy
Will be wealth inexhaustible in the eternal journey,
May the mortal bonds perish,
May the vast Universe take him in its arms
and may he know in his fearless heart
The Great Unknown.*

3rd December, 1959

Rabindranath Tagore

(Tr : Dr. Anaya Chakravarty)

Pictorial Art of Tagore

PROF. O. C. GANGULY



DURING the last few years, the works of Rabindranath Tagore in various forms of literature,—poems, drama, essays, songs, short stories, and other works in fiction have evoked enthusiastic appreciation and admiration among an ever-growing circle of cultured connoisseurs particularly among the young generations in Bengal, and among that group of lovers of literature who have overgrown the forms, conventions and ideals of older types of expression, and, who with a modern outlook have been thirsting for a newer form of expression to answer to the needs of newer forms of thought. But even to the wildest admirers and blind worshippers of the poet's works in the field of literature, their favourite excursion into the field of Pictorial Art, has proved very embarrassing and has severely taxed their devotion to the Poet. They have been unable to understand and appreciate the Poet's point of view in his astounding graphic versification, or to extend any warm applause to the Poet's fantastic creations in line and colour. And I have been flooded with enquiries and appeals for help to an understanding of the Poet's Pictures. They have been exhibited in France, Germany, England and America and have extorted appreciation from European and American connoisseurs of art. The Poet-Artist of, or (shall we say,) the Artist-Poet had been very reluctant to place his creations in pictorial art before the devotees of his creations in literature. Happily, he was persuaded to exhibit his pictures at the Town-Hall in Calcutta in connection with the celebrations of his 70th birth-day, many years before his death. And later on, his pictures had been exhibited in other parts of India.

Being too much addicted to the study of literature, we have neglected to cultivate other forms of aesthetic expression and had forgotten

the alphabets and the languages the Plastic Art. On the other hand, we have developed a cultivated ignorance of the Principles of Art, as distinguished from Literature—an ignorance which a remarkable opportunity for contact with the living Art of Modern Bengal under the leadership of the late Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, for over a decade, has failed to dispel. We are now in a very embarrassing predicament, for, while we have neglected with impunity, the claims of the Tagore School of Painting, (which incidentally, has won laurels in Paris, Berlin, and New York, and has spread its influences on all parts of India),—we can ill afford to treat the pictorial creations of our great national poet, (a World-Poet), with any manner of indifference, or neglect. We are now compelled to make an attempt to learn the rudiments of the Visual Arts, and the fundamental principles that govern them. It is scarcely, to be expected that we could develop our aesthetic "Third eye," immediately, or could master the language of the Visual Arts, at one stroke, so as to be in a position to critically appraise and appreciate the quality of the Poet's Pictures, which appear to our untrained eyes, so 'absurd', 'so queer,' so 'fantastic' and so 'grotesque.'

It requires years of training before our lovers of literature can master the alphabets, the vocabulary, and the grammar of a particular language before one is qualified to enter into the atmosphere of that language and to establish contacts with its master-pieces,—be it Chinese Painting, Greek Drama, or Sanskrit Poetry. The first step towards an understanding of a new language is to shed our old pre-conceptions and prejudices, and to place ourselves in the attitude of a passive learner, an attitude of reverence and humanity. To appreciate a work of art unfamiliar to us, it

is necessary to approach in a spirit of worship, not in a gesture of militant repudiation ;—not to *ask* questions, but to *accept* its message and to try to understand it,—to let the pictures talk to us, instead of talking to the pictures, ourselves.

The most obvious meaning that the Drawings of the Poet (excepting some landscape pieces) conveys us that they are not conscious reproductions of the existing forms of nature. They do not set out to imitate, illustrate, or reproduce any recognizable forms, or types. That they may have chance resemblances to forms of flowers, animals, or human bodies, is more a matter of accident than of design. In fact they have no deliberate aim or intention to produce any definite, recognizable kind of forms. They are the accidental bye-products of care-free and careless indulgences,—in a quaint manner of pen-manship,—which allows the pen to wander about on the paper, apparently, without any aims—but really in response to a sub-conscious urge for a pilgrimage in search for Rhythmic Forms,—“in an automatic submission to a rhythmic impulse.” The character and quality of these chance calligraphs have to be judged not by their so-called resemblance to any known forms, but by the abstract rhythmic qualities of their bends and curves,—the harmonious orchestration of their component lines, and the uniqueness of the designs of their forms. The lines and forms have, therefore, to be judged in their individual quality, for their own sake, for their intrinsic merit, and for their capacity to weave out a rhythmic design. The individual merit of a peculiar line, or an idiosyncratic curve,—not answering to any familiar forms,—lies in its capacity to evoke a physiological pleasure to the eye, as it caressingly follows its rhythmic career through an intricate pattern of organic relations, without any ‘meaning’ or concrete, descriptive, or philosophical significance. Such designs do not stand for, symbolize, or interpret any idea, but stand by themselves as abstract and imaginary orchestrations of lines, having plastic qualities, akin to music. If we wished to indicate their quality by parallels in musical or literary compositions, we might say, they have analogies firstly, in non-sense verses, improvised by our grannies and old nurses as “lullabies” to put children to sleep, and, secondly, in the *telena* (tarana) songs in Indian music, composed in

meaningless syllables stitched together in rhythmic versifications.

On the first analogy, these drawings have a child-like simplicity and a spontaneity of vision and imagination. This may appear contradictory to the highly intellectual and sophisticated culture of a talented poet. But they are really the products of a mood of un-sophisticated indulgence—in spells of “visane” hours, when the conscious intellectual powers go to sleep, and when the latest sub-conscious impulses of artistic creation put fourth their army of fairies and imps, who, in course of their childish pranks, playfully weave out original and aesthetic coldwebs of fantastic dreams.

The chief difficulty to a responsive approach to these drawings lies in the fact that they are not wholly and unconditionally non-representatives, like the geometric *arabesques* of Islamic Art. They are somewhat tantalizing in their distant suggestions for and analogies with human and animal forms. Generally, the designs are abstract in their embryonic stage, but gradually, by the added gifts of superposed limbs, they sometime shadow forth the ghosts of some natural forms,—hovering between the actual and the imaginary, and in the final shape, the memory of a known form is submerged and buried in the unreality of a weird dream. The wayward twisting of the outline of a bird, blossoms out into a fantastic flower, and *vice versa*. Some chance combinations of line start to shape into the form of an orchid, or a shell, but, some how, they ‘change their minds’ and discarding all laws of Biology, evolve, ultimately into a shape resembling a human form. From the depths of an intricate pattern of chance scribbles, the shape of a flower slowly springs fourth, but somehow avoids that destiny and is born in the form of a quaint un-earthly creature—not having any exact prototype in the human or the animal kingdom. In this manner these fanciful creations hover between the destiny of known and unknown forms—Sometimes culminating in the perfect pattern of a plausible shape, rich in ornamental elements, but very often consigned to the purgatory of mis-shapen things, to which the plastic logic of the poet-artist had denied a better destiny.

To those who are trained to understand the rhythmical quality of linear compositions, to those who are qualified to respond to the music of curves and the vibrating pulsation of abstract patterns, the imaginary qualities of the Poet's drawings have a refreshing charm and creativeness in their power of devising new shapes and designs. For, it is now an accepted canon of all modern artistic creeds in Europe, as in Asia ; that the artist has an inherent right not only to deviate from the well-trodden paths of familiar forms—current in the World of Nature—but to compete with Nature and to devise new shapes and forms, to create a new world of imagination clothed in the atmosphere of aesthetic dreams. Visva-Karmma as the descendant of Bramha has an inherent right to create original forms to be judged and appraised by no other standard than that of Rhythm and Beauty.

The infinite variety of original creations of Asiatic Art in its diverse phases of Assyrian, Sassarian, Indian, Chinese, and Polynesian Art,

—have been neglected and repudiated by a generation of people of untrained judgement, and spoiled by a slavish adherence to a narrow doctrine of realistic and representational ideals in Plastic Art.

The original creations of the poet in a new world of Expression will help us to realise the fundamental values of Forms for their own sake, and, incidentally, to chide away the prejudices and misconceptions which had misled us to regard Art as the imitative representation of natural appearances.

The neglected artists of the Modern Revival in Bengal, the starving outcasts of modern Bengali culture, are rejoicing in the fact that the conversion of a great literary genius to the true doctrines of plastic creeds was a veritable triumph for them ; for if they had failed to conquer Phillistine India, impervious to artistic stimulations, they succeeded in capturing her greatest Poet.

*To the dumb, languishing and the stupefied
must we give voice ;*

*These hearts, withered, withered and broken
must be galvanised with new hope ;*

*Beckoning them we must exhort,
Lift up your heads this very instant
and stand united,*

*They before whom you quake in fear, quake more
than you in their guilt,*

They will take to their heels the moment you are roused.

Robinraath Tagore

Rabindranath The Mystic

DILIP KUMAR ROY



YEARS ago, the Poet, while reminiscing about himself once said to me—as I have recorded in my 'Among the Great': "I believe we are free, within limits. . . . and yet there is an unseen hand, a guiding angel that does, somehow, like a submerged propeller, drive us on." As I asked him to be a little more explicit, he gave a simile :

"Let us suppose there is a flutist who has fashioned some flutes. Naturally each of these has a different timber. But you find that a few flutes surpass the others. Somehow or other, these emit deeper notes of the perfect pitch. The flutist no doubt plays on all his flutes, but he likes best to play on these exceptional ones. The same with regard to men. The Supreme Moulder of personalities has cast them in different moulds building them each with a different stuff of experiences, sensibilities and capacities. Yet some will always excell the rest. These, if you study them closely, are not unlikely to give you some glimpses of a special design of the Designer."

He was somewhat apologetic about thus seeming to claim to be superior to his fellows. But none who has ever met him could possibly misunderstand, still less blame, a Parnassian like him for being conscious of his genius. For—to exploit his own simile—the Supreme Flutist who had chiselled him into the exquisite flute he was, must have done so because he could play through him some of his melodies to better advantage than through the others.

In a beautiful poem entitled "*Jivana Devata*"—written more than sixty years ago—he had asked the "Lord of his life."

'Thou thyself chocest me I know not for
what end !

Didst thou, from thy lone heights
Smile on my days and nights,
My plays and strivings, O my life's one Lord
and Friend ?

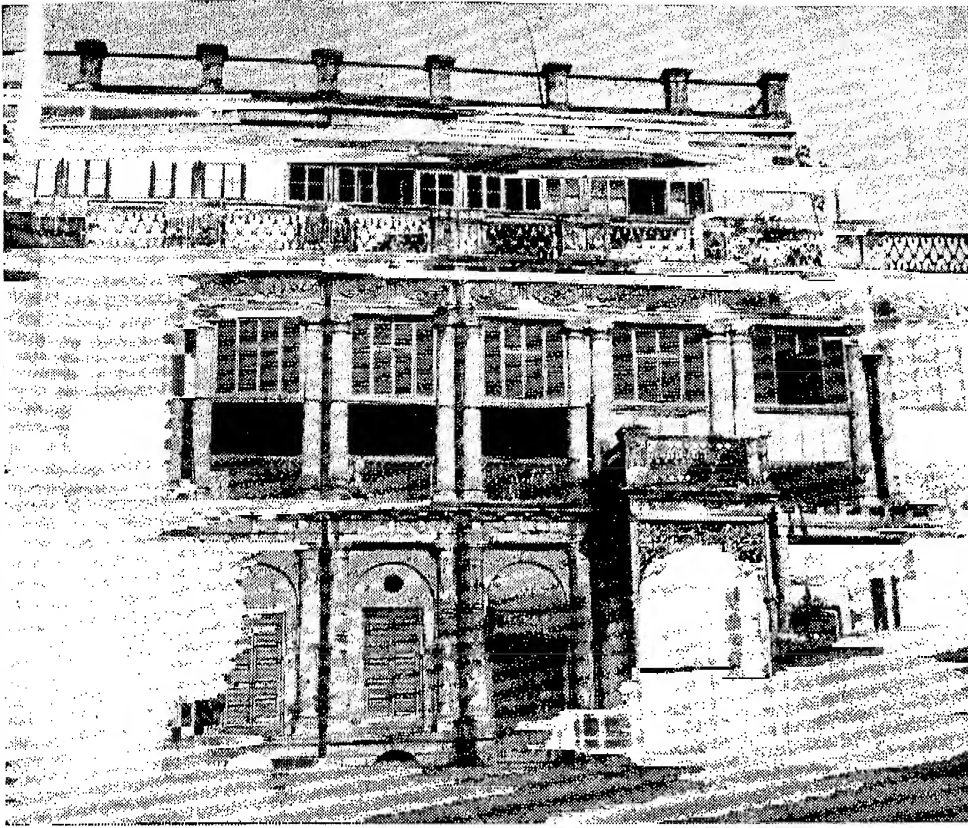
(*My translation*).

That he was missioned to sing of what he had seen, has been a constant theme of his self-exploration on which he improvised to the end of his days ; and, thrilling again and again to the marvellous discoveries that he came upon at every turn he went on singing of what he had glimpsed in Nature, Man, Love, Faith, the world as it is, and lastly, the world as it might have been had we, each of us, lent ourselves to be a willing flute in the hands of the Supreme Flutist. For then, he sang, each of us would spontaneously acquire the blessed status of a creator in different fields because that is what He expects from us : to share His creative joy :

'Thou hast but fashioned this our
earth of clay,
A melange of night and day . . .
Laying thy yoke on me
To new-create the Heaven that is to be.'

As I was translating this from his famous poem in '*Balaka*' it was borne home to me anew how he had loved to dream and dream of this last "Heaven to be" on different levels. But this must not be taken to mean that he was merely a Utopist who dwelt in rainbow-hues and golden clouds. For he was born with an exacting intellect which would hold no truck with mere sentimentality or an aerial idealism which could not bear the rude impact of the real. So while he was eager to share his vision—his dream-world of beauty and bliss, freedom and favour—he never refrained from criticising the flaws of our world as it is in the light of the world that we could, if we but would, bring into being by the creative **tapas** -fire- of our souls' aspirations.

On his Seventieth Birthday he gave us a revelation about himself, namely, that although he had appeared on earth with many possibilities he had come to realise that he had been missioned to evolve into a poet, **Kavi**, first and last.

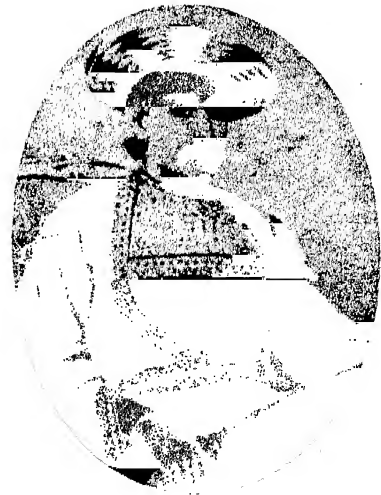


JORASANKO

TAGORE HOUSE

—ঠাকুর বাড়ি

ভাতে ঘেথা দত্য হেম, মাতে ঘেথা বীর
 গুন জ্যোতি হরে ঘেথা মনের তিমির,
 নব শোভা ধরে ঘেথা দোম আর রবি
 দেহে দেব নিকেতন আলো করে রবি ॥
 —দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথ



দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুর
 Prince Dwarkanath (1794-1846)

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট



ভিতরের বারান্দা

Inner Veranda
of Jorasanko



ঠাকুর বাড়ী (বাহির)

Outer View

মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ (১৮১৭-১৯০৫)



Maharshi Devendranath (1817-1905)

জননী সারদা দেবী



Mother Sarada Devi



বঙ্গ সাহিত্য সম্মেলনের সভাপতি
(১৩১৪)

As President Banga Sahitya
Sanmilan 1314-B.S.



বড়দাদা— দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর
Dwijendranath Tagore
(1840-1926)

স্বদেশী আন্দোলনের কালে (১৯০৫)
During 1905 Swadesi Days



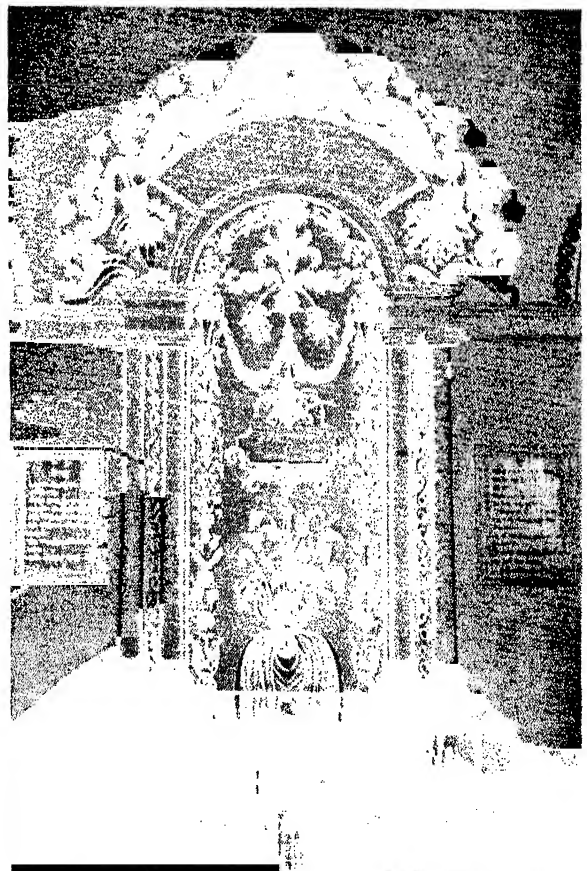
শ্রী মৃণালিনী দেবী
Mrinalini Devi
Wife





1913

১৯১৩



প্রার্থনা মন্দির—জোড়াসাঁকো

He was right, but when he claimed that he was a **kavi** he meant it in the Vedic sense which gives the authentic **kavi** the status of the sage. Sri Aurobindo has fully endorsed this view in his **Future Poetry**. He says that the authentic **kavi** transcribes what he has actually heard, and that is why the Vedas are called **Shruti**, it is this receptivity to revelation that entitles the **kavi** to the title of a sage or seer.

This must not be taken, however, to imply that the function of the poet is on all fours with that of the sage or seer. For the poet's *métier* is to see and sing whereas the sage's is to think and philosophise. I only want to stress that on their highest flights the sage and the poet become kin, fellow-pilgrims, bound for the same goal.

Needless to say that we are talking now of the truly great poet and sage, not of the average poet of little thrills, still less of the ordinary intellectual who utterly fails to go beyond the mind. If Tagore had been such a poet or sage it would not be worth our while to study his philosophy or outlook on life. It is just because he could think as well as feel with his heart, that intimacy with him is so rewarding.

Rewarding, I repeat, because Tagore had the rare gift to be able to feel the pulse of the world with his own heart-beat—which is the reason why profound soul-intuitions would come to him like angels' visits shedding the light of the eternal at every turn. (And was this not the reason why Yeats, speaking of Tagore's poetry, characterized it as "the work of a supreme culture" born of a "tradition where poetry and religion are the same thing.")

Yes, all through his life he aspired for the supreme "heaven of freedom" for his country as well as for his soul, because freedom—**mukti**—has always been the dream of the noblest dreamers and the bravest pilgrims of the spirit. In one of his most beautiful songs he voiced this aspiration :

"Know once for all : win freedom you must,
my soul,

And tread the Way that leads beyond to
the Goal."

(*My Translation*)

But mere aspiration for freedom has never won man the goal, any more than it has made his "knowledge free" or kept his "clear stream of reason" from losing its way : one has to fulfil the conditions whereby knowledge can stay uncontaminated by worldliness, reason by self-seeking. And none can achieve purity save those who dread impurity even more than the abayas. Tagore once told me that he had from his childhood days thirsted after purity and held that the deepest revelations of the spirit could never be accorded to those whose emotions had not been purified by a sleepless self-discipline.

Which must not be construed to mean that Tagore was an austere ascetic who loved the traditional renunciation (*tyag*) or the earth-averse escapism for its own sake. His credo hereant he voiced is one of his noblest sonnets (later translated by himself in *Gitanjali*) :

"Deliverance is not for me in renunciation,
I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand
bonds of delight.
Thou ever pourest for me the fresh
draught of thy wine of various colours
and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel
to brim.

"My world will light its hundred different
lamps with thy flame and place them
before the altar of thy temple.

No, I will never shut the doors of my
senses.
The delights of sight and hearing and touch
will bear thy delight.
Yes, all my illusions will burn into illumina-
tion of joy, and all my desires ripen into
fruits of love.

He was, indeed a born votary of all that his beloved Mother Earth spread before his eyes from day to day in ever-new and endless carnivals of rapture. His heart, mind and senses could never be staid with her glorious plentitude of blooming beauty, mystic murmur and fairy fragrance. The more he received of her lavish blandishments the more fervently he sang of her supreme bounty :

“Thy gifts to us mortals fulfil all our needs
and yet run back to thee undiminished.
The river has its everyday work to do and
hastens through fields and hamlets : yet
its incessant stream winds towards the
washing of thy feet.
Flower sweetens the air with its perfume ;
yet its last service is to offer itself to
them.
Thy worship does not impoverish the world.
From the words of the poet men take what
meanings please them ; yet their last
meaning points to thee.”
(*Gitanjali*, p. 69)

He had spoken of this ‘last meaning’ in one of his earliest poems, **Prabhat Utsav**, a poem inspired by a revelation. Here is what he wrote about it in his **Reminiscences** :

“One morning as I was looking out from my varandah. . . . a veil seemed to be lifted off my eyes and I saw the world aureoled with an ineffable glory, billowing out everywhere on the crests of bliss and beauty. . . . and I wrote :

“How my heart has opened suddenly,
O bliss !
Where visits me the world to embrace
and kiss !”
(*Translated by Poet*)

The experience was a two fold one in that—to quote his own words—“I saw as if with my whole consciousness . . . that deep down the fathomless womb of the universe an inexhaustible fountain of quintessential delight was out-spraying laughter on all sides.”

This vision, he claimed, was the basis of the whole super-structure of his poetry : “this marriage of the infinite with the finite or, to be

more explicit (to translate one of his most famous songs) :

“O Infinite, through the finite playest thou
Thy native melody !
Thou art so exquisite because thou wouldst
Outflower on earth through me !”

It is this total acceptance of our world of laughter and tears, song and silence, light and shade—a world which shines out in tremulous beauty in the heart of fathomless pain—that made him testify in profound gratitude to the gifts of grace he had received from life at every step and yet could never be appeased thereby. Of this deep debt he has sung soulfully in another memorable poem of his entitled, **When I depart** (of which I give my translation of the first verse) :

“When I bid adieu, be this my parting word :
All I received and saw was marvellous, Lord !
The lotus that has blown in this
Our deep of deathless light and bliss,
I have drunk its honey : I am blessed, Lord !
When I depart, may this be my last word.”

This was one of the deepest messages of his beauty-hungry spirit which could not stay put in the pen of penury and disharmony. For he was at home only in the Home of Beauty, as her cherished guest, a grateful guest, who longed for nothing as ardently as for the freedom that accrues to one through one’s tireless worship of her redeeming loveliness, as he sang ecstatically in one of his most impassioned lyrics :

“O Beautiful, my beautiful !
Thou hast now borne me company,
My limbs are hallowed and my soul
Is blessed everlastingly.”

(*My Translation*)

*I shall be born in India again and again -
With all her poverty, misery and wretchedness
I love India best*

—TAGORE

The Poet of the Dawn

ANIL BARÂN ROY



WE are veritably on the threshold of a new age; new worlds with all their mystery are opening to our vision not only in the outer space in the infinite material plane, but also in the inner worlds which are at the foundation of the creation. We want poets to give us a forceful vision of these which will help us to see them more largely and feel them more strongly and give us a certain inspiration to live them more powerfully. Rabindranath is a harbinger of such poets, veritably a Poet of the Dawn of the New Age, of the *Satya Yuga* of the Indian scriptures, the Kingdom of Heaven of the Bible, the New Earth of the *Koran*.

When materialistic science was undermining the faith of mankind in the existence of a God, Rabindranath through his songs lighted that faith in our hearts again. He also taught us that God is to be found not through rites and ceremonies, not through creeds and dogmas but through love. He has not appealed to our intellect through a philosophy, he has appealed to our hearts and made us realise the true significance of creation and the meaning of human life — it is the Vedantic truth given through songs that God who is One has created this manifold world to taste the delight of love.

"Thus it is that thy joy in me is so full. Thus it is that thou has come down to me. O thou lord of all heavens where would be thy love if I were not ?

"Thou hast taken me as thy partner of all this wealth. In my heart is the endless play of thy delight. In my life thy will is ever taking shape.

"And for this, thou who art the King of kings hast decked thyself in beauty to captivate my heart. And for this thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover, and there art thou seen in the perfect union of two."

No wonder the Irish poet Yeats said about the prose translations of Gitanjali, "have stirred

my blood as nothing has for years." This is indeed something new to the West who have learnt to regard God with awe and fear. That God can be made an object of intense love, just as human beings love each other and even more is something quite new to them—Rabindranath gave to the world a new vision of love and delight raised to the spiritual plane that makes human life really worth living. "And very often," says Sri Aurobindo, "a nation in its self-expression is both helped and limited by what has been left behind from the evolution of a past self which, being dead, yet liveth."

In the apologue of *Vrindaban*, Rabindranath learnt to see God as a God of Beauty, Love and Bliss and by realization of God he understood the realization of all these spiritual values in life. He approached God through all the beauty, love and joy that there is in life. In this he was a true successor of the *raishnar* poets of Bengal. But he could not shut his eyes to the other side of the shield, to the intense suffering and sorrow that is in life and in this also he was influenced by the pessimistic tone of past Indian thought. Even the Gita, which asks men not to run away from life but to accept it in the spirit of a fighter against all ills like Arjuna, describes life in the world as *anityam asukham lokam*. The Lord says, "Thou who hast come to this transient and unhappy world, love and turn to Me." These words express the life and work of Rabindranath. He did not seek an explanation why the world should be so and what is the ultimate intention of God in this world, but he was convinced that this was not the whole truth. Thus he sang.

"If thou speakest not I will fill my heart with thy silence and endure it. I will keep still and wait like the night with the starry vigil and its head bent low with patience.

"The morning will surely come, the darkness

will vanish, and thy voice pour down in golden streams breaking through the sky."

"Then thy words will take wing in songs from every one of my birds' nests, and thy melodies will break forth in flowers in all my forest gardens."

It is this message of the coming divine outpouring on earthly life that has made Rabindranath a harbinger of the new age. In his songs the West have found a meaning in life. "These verses," says Yeats "will not lie in little well-printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sigh over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life."

"The work of the poet depends not only on himself and his age, but on the mentality of the nation to which he belongs and the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic tradition and environment which it creates for him"

Rabindranath's appeal was primarily to the

Bengalis whom he expected to be moved by the same vision and the same emotions that he himself had. The Bengali mind was indeed prepared by the songs of the *Vaishnava* poets and the spiritual movement led by Sri Chaitanya who was an incarnation of divine love ; on the other hand, it is this spirit in Bengal that helped Rabindranath to find his own inspiration. Another thing that helped him to find his own self was the family and the environment in Bengal in which he was born and brought up. Poverty did not stand in the way of the development of his faculties as it is actually doing at present in the case of so many sons and daughters of Bengal. "When Rabindranath was a boy he had all round him in his home literature and music." Let it be our endeavour to make every Bengali home like that which produced a Rabindranath, only then we can see what the genius of Bengal can yet do for herself and for humanity.

*Tumultuous years bring their voice to your bosom,
Untathomed Past !*

*In what dark silence do you keep it gathered, covering it under
your brooding wings ?*

*You move in secret like midnight hours realising dreams ;
often have I felt your muffled steps in my blood,
have seen your hushed countenance
in the heart of the garrulous day.*

*You come to write stories of our fathers in unseen scripts
on the pages of our destiny ;*

*You lead back to life the unremembered
for the shaping of new images.*

*Is not the restless Present itself your own visions flung up
like planets that arise
from the bottom of dumb night ?*

TAGORE



Rabindranath Tagore

Poet and Teacher

DR. NIKOLAUS KLEIN

It is hardly possible to draw in a few lines the picture of an eminent personality such as Rabindranath Tagore, quite impossible to do justice to his striking versatility. If this is, nevertheless, attempted here, the author is fully aware of the fact, that only a rough sketch can be the result.

To Europe Rabindranath Tagore is known chiefly as the great Indian poet, although so far only part of his literary work has been published in translations, the German translations being based on the English text, so that poems, in particular, often do not speak anymore the language of the original Bengali. The importance of Tagore's literary work, however, does actually not lie in its extent and diversity, but rather in the richness of its language. For Tagore was not only a poet, but first and foremost a creative linguist who raised Bengali from the state of a mere medium of communication to that of a rich and powerful literary language.

Tagore's poetical talent manifested itself very early, in fact, already in his childhood, doubtlessly influenced by the atmosphere of his surroundings. The residence of his family at Jorasanko, where he was born on May 8, 1861, was one of the centres of the spiritual life of Calcutta. Here all those met who played an important role in the renaissance of Bengali literature. Young Tagore was not only an attentive listener, but wrote poems and articles for a number of literary journals published by his relatives. Most of these early writings, however, he later on condemned as immature and worthless as too much following traditional standards and conventions, of which his first collection of poems, the "Evening Songs" of 1879, are free. In 1880, his "Morning Songs" were published followed soon by other volumes of lyric poetry a selection of which he later translated into English under the titles "*The Gardener*" and "*Gitanjali*."

It was this small volume of "*Gitanjali*" which—published in 1912 in a private edition with a foreword by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats and appearing in 1913 for public sale—made Rabindranath Tagore almost overnight a celebrated poet who in the same year 1913 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. An Indian poet, famed, though, in his country, but hardly known to anybody in Europe, all of a sudden entered Western Literature and with a volume of poems opened a new world, his world to the eyes of the West.

It is little known in Europe, that Tagore himself has set to music many of his later poems, although *Rabindra Sangit* certainly holds an important place in the cultural life of Bengal, and despite the fact, that his musical dramas are frequently staged.

Tagore was, however, not only a lyric poet, but also a dramatist, essayist, and novelist. Some of his dramas are known in Europe and have been staged occasionally, among them the lyrical dramas "*Chitrangada*" and "*Kshanika*" which Tagore wrote during the last decade of the 19th Century while he was in-charge of the family estate *Shelaidah*, and the two mystical dramas "*The King of the Dark Chamber*" and "*The Post Office*," both originating from the first decade of this century. The Tagore Centenary not only in Germany, but also in other countries also brought some of his dramas back to the stage.

Well-known in Europe are Rabindranath Tagore's novels "*The Wreck*" "*The Home and the World*" and, in particular, "*Gora*" which is regarded as the greatest novel of Bengali literature.

At *Shelaidah*, Tagore had published a journal which had the same title as his principal work on religion and philosophy : "*Sadhana*." In his

own contributions to this journal he expressed his criticism of the then existing educational system whose dark sides he himself had experienced during his childhood. In an article published in 1892, he declared himself particularly for the introduction of the vernaculars as medium of instruction instead of English. At *Sclaidah*, he himself taught his five children, trained teachers for them in accordance with what he had recognized as proper education, occasionally took over from a teacher and thus developed in theory and practice that pedagogy which he later on realized in his own school at Santiniketan, the present *Viswa-Bharati* University which he himself directed till his death on August 8, 1941.

For Tagore reforming the educational system which he felt was forced upon India and did not at all correspond to her actual need, was, however, not only an educational but also a patriotic task. Unlike many other intellectuals of India who in their mode of life and thinking followed English examples, the Tagores despite their open-mindedness had remained true Indians and supported the patriotic *Swadeshi* movement at the beginning of this century in

every possible way. Tagore himself dedicated to Indian patriotic poems, songs, essays and the novel "*Gora*", already mentioned. Yet never did Tagore defend those who wished to liberate India from foreign rule through revolution and terror. In 1905, when the partition of Bengal created considerable unrest and riots were feared, as well as during the Non-Co-operation movement of 1921, it was he who again and again called for prudence and tried to canalize patriotism in constructive work.

Comparatively late in his life Rabindranath Tagore began to paint. That, too, is little known in Europe, although in 1930 he took a selection of his paintings to several European countries. These pictures which after his own words carried a universal message, whereas his literary message was more restricted to Bengal, met especially in Germany with greater appreciation than in India. The Tagore Centenary was an ideal opportunity for European art publishers to publish at least a choice selection of Tagore's paintings whose colour combinations and often strikingly "modern" compositions are fascinating.

*Small is man's body,
How immense his strength of suffering,
To each moment he brings endless value
From his unconquerable will,
Is there anywhere such quest, nameless radiant,
Such pilgrims together from road to road ?
Such pure water of service, breaking through igneous rocks,
Such endless store of love ?*

Gurudeva Tagore

PROF. TAN YUN-SHAN

Director, China Bhavan, Santiniketan



GURUDEVA Rabindranath Tagore was well-known to the outside world as the greatest poet of modern India as Kalidasa, author of "Meghaduta" or "The Cloud Messenger", and Asvaghosa, author of "Buddhacharita-Kavya" or "Hymns in Praise of the Life of Buddha", were in ancient times of this great country.

But Rabindranath was not merely a great poet. He was much more and greater than a great poet. His songs are perhaps of even greater emotional appeal to his own people than his poetry. His poetry undoubtedly ranks with the hymns of the other great poets, not only of India but of the world, not only of the present but of the past and may be so also of the future. But there is hardly anything to match his songs from the very beginning of human civilization up to now.

Moreover, he was a great educationist, a great theorist, a great novelist, a great dramatist, a great essayist, a great painter, a great singer, a great orator and what not. He could really be called "all in one," "all in all," and "all and all". His great genius and talent, his profound vision and wisdom, his vast erudition and versatility, his lofty ideas and ideals, his universal love and compassion, his broad mind and heart, his magnificent spirit and soul, his gracious appearance and deportment, and even his beautiful voice and laughter had few peers in the world.

Yet again, to me he was more of a saint and teacher than anything else. He was an embodiment of Indian as well as Eastern or Asian cultures and traditions. He was really a *Maharishi* or an *Avatara* of Indian as well as Asiatic or Eastern philosophies and religions. He was and still is and will ever be a supreme

Mahaguru or *Gurudeva* not only of Santiniketan and India but also of Asia and the World.

What *Gurudeva* impressed and inspired me most were his absolute humanism, universalism and altruism ; his love and affection for China and the Chinese people ; his understanding and appreciation of Chinese learning and culture ; and his advocacy and promotion of Sino-Indian Studies, Sino-Indian Cultural Inter-change, Sino-Indian Friendship and Fraternity, Sino-Indian Amity and Unity. It was his firm and fast belief as well as my sincere and ardent conviction that through these we shall be able to change the atmosphere, to alter the situation, to transform the condition of this world of our time ; and in the long run create a new world and a new era where and when there will be only real love, peace, harmony and unity of all mankind without any dispute, quarrel, conflict, struggle and fight, not to mention War.

It was for this reason that I have long devoted my humble self, body and mind, to the service of *Gurudeva*, through *Gurudeva* to his Institution, and through his Institution to this great country and people of India.

O, *Gurudeva* ! this is the Centenary of your birth. Although physically you no longer live and remain with us to this world, yet your noble spirit and soul, your lofty ideas and ideals, your glorious teaching and mission, your splendid literature and art, will even live in the world as long as the world itself lives, till the end of time.

O, *Gurudeva* ! My homage to Thee, to Thee my devotion !



At the Feet of the Master

B. GOPALA REDDI

I always felt fortunate that I was a student of Viswa Bharati when Poet Rabindranath was alive. My brother visited Santiniketan after attending the Special Session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in September, 1920 and returned home full of praise for Santiniketan. He brought with him some English translations of Rabindranath's books and also Pearson's book on Santiniketan with a few illustrations. That was the beginning of my veneration for the Poet and I cherished a vague desire that I should also have my studies in the Ashram. But it looked far away from my place in Nellore District. I was then thirteen years of age.

After the Nagpur session of the Congress in December, 1920, I gave up my studies in a Government aided school and joined the Andhra Jateeya Kalasala, Machilipatnam. I remember I used to read the short stories of Tagore and the deep pathos with which many of them ended, made tears roll down my cheeks. Nothing moved me so much as some of those stories in my impressionable years. A few lyrics from Crescent Moon also were my favourites and these were read out to me first by my brother. My desire to go to Santiniketan was getting strengthened while I was studying at Machilipatnam. A friend from West Godavari District who was senior to me at Machilipatnam went to Santiniketan and he was also writing to me occasionally giving a glowing account of the life at the Ashram. We had "Home and the World" as a text book for non-detailed study and the conflict of those characters and the beautiful similes with which it was replete intensified my desire to go to Santiniketan. At my request, my brother took me to Santiniketan in July, 1924 and admitted me in the Siksha Bhavan Course. I studied there for three years and in April 1927 I completed my course, appeared for the class examination and left for home.

I had been full of dreams about life in Santi-

niketan and when I first went there, the scenes at the Ashram did not disappoint me. The silent meditations of the students in the mornings and evenings held in the open, the classes under the shades of *sal* and mango trees, the presence of the Poet in the Ashram at Uttarayan and the simple and artistic life of the students and teachers impressed me very much indeed. Almost on the second or third day, I purchased "Elementary Readers" in Bengali and began my first lesson under Sri Chalamayya who was a student of Vidya Bhavan and who had by that time spent over eight years at the Ashram. He initiated me into Bengali and to Tagore's books in Bengali. Within a fortnight I was reading Tagore's 'Sishu' (the original of the "Crescent Moon" in Bengali). The very idea that I was reading Rabindranath in the original Bengali gladdened my heart. I felt a sense of exhilaration when I found that I could, falteringly though, read a few lines and understand their meaning. My concentration was more on my Bengali lessons than on the English, history and other classes. New vistas of literary beauties were opening before me as I read a few more poems of 'Sishu' and the first impressions of my reading Rabindranath's works have been memorable. I can aver with confidence that, even now, I have the same passionate regard and veneration whenever I read him either in Bengali or in English. His stories, novels, essays and poems make me feel very homely, a feeling which I do not get when I read English authors; the names, the scenes, the emotions are so similar in Indian languages that one does not feel a stranger amidst Tagore's writings. The lyrical content of his writings, his unique style, the phrasing and the beautiful similes with which he adorns his style breathe a fresh air which always appeal to me.

I thoroughly enjoyed my three years' stay at the Ashram. It was a care-free life, we were never tormented by the bogey of examinations and

the company of students from various parts of India moulded my outlook, my tastes and my attitudes. As I look back I always feel a sense of pride and delight that the best part of my life was spent there amidst beautiful surroundings full of poetry and music, a superbly equipped open library and, above all, the holy presence of the Poet. Before my brother left Santiniketan after my admission there, we went to see the Poet for the first time. He was very cordial and asked us some questions about our place and when we said Nellore, the Poet very heartily remarked "famous for bulls !" (Ongole was once a part of the Nellore District). My brother did the conversing while I sat silent by his side gazing at the venerable Poet and listening to his sonorous voice. During my stay at Santiniketan, I did not go to the Poet very often. Perhaps, in the three years that I spent there, I believe, I talked to him on three or four occasions ; but I never missed an opportunity of seeing the Poet from a distance or listening to him. To see him was a festival and to hear him was a feast. I used to listen to his Wednesday morning Sermons in the Mandir. In the beginning, I did not understand him, but it did not matter. I would go to the Mandir and listen to his exposition of the Upanishadic Truths in a poetic philosophical way. Occasionally he would raise his voice and wax eloquent. His Sermons were philosophy in prose-poems, the mystery of the Upanishads being revealed in beautiful language. Either when he was conversing or speaking in the Mandir, I used to admire his beautiful voice ; never heard I a masculine voice of such sweetness. His voice was not shrill but melodious. It was not a feminine voice, but it was gentle and graceful. I have not come across any other voice which even approximated to that of Rabindranath. The flowing hair and the beard, the exquisite profile and the prominent nose—these held my attention as I sat listening to him whether I understood him or not. It was a joy to be looking at him and I used to repeat within myself "Who could gainsay that I am just now beholding the greatest of the living poets ?" It was a privilege and a fortune that I was seeing him and hearing him week after week. Along with other Bengali students, I would bow and touch his feet, which is the custom in Bengal

and in Northern India. It was again a high privilege to touch a very great person who was at once a Rishi, a Poet, a Musician and a World Celebrity. Time has not whittled down my veneration for the Poet. During certain periods of my imprisonment, when I was teaching Bengali or teaching his songs or translating his books, I was full of the thought of Rabindranath. This thought sustained me in my jail life and its inconveniences did not trouble me at all. Thoughts of him gave me great solace and his writings cheered me in my depressed moments. His Gitanjali in English is a prayer book to me on all auspicious occasions and on my birth days I read a few poems from it and live in the thoughts of Rabindranath. In 1938, there were discussions and consultations among my people over fixing an auspicious day for my marriage. I found them a solution by deciding on May 8 ; what more auspicious day could there be than the sacred day of Gurudev's birth !

I followed Gandhiji and gave up my school, went to prison many times and was closely associated with the Congress from 1930, but I always think of Tagore as though he entwined me with the silken chords of his music. I surrendered myself to Gandhiji in my political work and to Gurudev on the cultural side. I do not claim myself to be a great scholar in Tagorean literature, the Bengali books I read were not many, but I can say with certainty that there were not many days in the last thirty-seven years when I did not think of him.

During my stay at Santiniketan my attachment to Telugu literature became deeper, *albeit* opportunities for reading such literature were not there. I used to feel the big difference between an average Telugu man and an average Bengali with regard to their proficiency in their mother-tongue. A Bengali was well versed in his language whatever profession he followed. But that was not so with the Telugus in those days, and even now it is the same to a large extent. Apart from other reasons, the high-class Telugu style with all its long compounds or Samasams and all the grammatical regulations is more difficult to understand than classical or modern Bengali. That made me love Telugu nevertheless and I used to feel a new sense of

attachment which I did not experience before. I admire the Bengalees for being the inheritors of a rich legacy of modern literature.

The ideal of Viswa Bharati which aims at unity and affinity through cultural understanding and through exchange of cultures has had a strong appeal for me. The fundamental unity of men was contemplated through the idea of Viswa Bharati and opportunities are provided for getting scholars from abroad and sending Indian scholars to some of those countries. Being nationalist biased, I thought I would apply the Viswa Bharati ideal within the country in the first instance ; let me understand India through the various languages and literatures before I try to understand the European countries or the Middle-East or the Far-East Asian countries. That was the urge which prompted me to learn the languages of India. That compromise I thought would satisfy my nationalist conscience and my love for Viswa Bharati ideal. I tried to learn all the North Indian languages and understand their background literary history. I began a little of Urdu, Assamese and Oriya in a very informal way and Gujarati a little more diligently. Later I was in Poona for a few weeks to learn Marathi. When I was in jail after a few years, I tried to learn the South Indian languages too.

I attempted to learn all Indian languages which I thought would open the gates of understanding my fellow Indian citizens. That attempt, though feeble in many respects, made me appreciate and admire our sister-languages. It also enabled me to visualise India as a composite whole in spite of the apparent diversity of languages. That gave a broad base to my affinities and in later years, I did not suffer from any language or religious complexes. I always feel that this was one of the great benefits which accrued to me by my stay at Santiniketan where all Indian language groups were represented.

The more I think the more I am convinced of the need for opportunities both in our colleges and universities for a larger-number of scholars knowing other Indian languages. Even after the advent of Independence, I do not find enough interest being bestowed for learning other lan-

guages. For instance, how many are there in Bengal who know Tamil or Marathi well, or how many there are in India outside their own regions who can speak with authority Malayalam, Telugu or Gujarati. The Universities and the University Grants' Commission, according to my thinking, must consider the matter seriously and create facilities and even make such knowledge a condition for service in some departments like Education.

Due to the inspiration given by the Poet, the Santiniketan atmosphere was full of poetry, music, dance and painting. Within a few months of my going there, I became very fond of Bengali music, or to be exact, with Rabindra Sangeet. I used to attend music classes and learn quite a few songs which had a peculiar fascination for me. Apart from a few prayer songs, there were a large number of seasonal songs. You could hear rainy season songs only in July and August and the spring songs only in spring. There were songs which you could hear on bright moon light nights. As the Poet used to compose new songs, they used to become very current in the Ashram. The Poet himself used to teach some of these songs for some festive occasion and they would be the craze of the Ashram. From every corner you would hear those new songs till another set of new songs came and threw the earlier ones to the background. Thus the atmosphere was surcharged with ever new melodies and that was because the Poet was continuously composing songs. The Poet used to gather some students at Uttarayan and read out his latest play or short story. Some of his later dance-dramas used to be directed by the Poet personally ; after a good deal of rehearsal, they were put on boards which attracted a number of visitors from Calcutta. I saw the Poet personally coaching girl students for some dance performances. We had dance teachers from Manipur and from Kerala ; music masters were sent to Indonesia to study the dance art in that country. Thus new plays and new dance dramas were holding the field and making us feel that the cultural life there was ever fresh and green. The floor decorations with Alpana also became a craze there and the people took a lot of pains in decorating with new designs every time. Some years ago the Poet

himself was taking part in the dramas, but during my time, because of his age, he was only directing them. Occasionally he went up on the stage to recite in his beautiful sing-song way some of his new poems. I remember he came in pure yellow robes at Uttarayan to recite his poems on Nataraj before a very large gathering of teachers and students and outsiders.

In the last year of my stay in Santiniketan, the very idea that I had to leave soon depressed me. The atmosphere was so ennobling that I dreaded the impending deprivation of it. Santiniketan became very dear to me and I became more and more attached to it as the time of my departure approached. I went to see the Poet before I left. It was a hot mid-day in April 1927. The Poet was seated in an easy-chair and was writing. With great trepidation I went near him, touched his feet and told him that I was going away after completing my course in Siksha Bhavan. The Poet asked me what I intended to do and I told him I had to look after my properties. At that time, my brother was getting more and more attached to the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. The Poet wished me well and I left Santiniketan with a heavy heart, with almost tears in my eyes.

Thereafter, I visited the Ashram only four times. When I went there last I roamed about the familiar surroundings which have changed with the advent of the University. But without the inspiring presence of the Poet, the place looked like a lyric which had lost its music. The trees are there, the avenues too, some of the old buildings are now surrounded by some new ones; some new reforms have been introduced. It looks like a new Santiniketan with memories of the old times enveloping it. At different periods the Poet lived

in the many buildings there; they are all holy places hallowed by his foot-prints. Even when I was there, many people visited Santiniketan, both foreign and Indian. It is certainly a pilgrimage centre.

In 1935 I admitted my nephew there and I saw the Poet too. He reminded me of the promise of a donation from the Maharaja of Jaipore and also another promise by the Maharaja of Pithapuram of a pair of bulls and a cart. On my return, I met the Dewan of Jaipore at Waltair and reminded him about the Maharaja's promise to Rabindranath.

In 1937, when I became a Minister in Sri Rajagopalachari's cabinet in Madras, I sent a telegram to Rabindranath at Santiniketan seeking his blessings. The Poet was gracious enough to send me his good wishes. In September 1937, I saw the Poet at Calcutta. I presented the Poet with a cheque for Rs. 1,000, a donation which I got from a friend in Ramnad District. The Poet was happy to receive me as a Congress Minister, with the remarks "what a shame we do not have a Congress Government in Bengal!" Janab Fazlul Huq was then the Chief Minister of Bengal.

On the day Gurudev passed away, we heard the news over the radio in Tiruchirapalli jail. We held a condolence meeting which I addressed. Sri Rajagopalachari and others were also there.

Looking back, I am conscious of the great benefit I derived by my stay at Santiniketan and drew inspiration from Tagore's personality, his message and his writings. These were the biggest factors which moulded my outlook on life. I pray that I may continue to draw inspiration from that embodiment of beauty and love.

He has been India's internationalist par excellence, believing and working for international co-operation, taking India's message to other countries and bringing their message to his own people.

Tagore, the aristocratic artist, turned democrat with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural tradition of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going through it with song and dance.....

Rabindranath Tagore

DR. S. SAMPURNANANDA



I first met Rabi Babu, as most of us affectionately refer to him, in August 1921. I was staying at Shantiniketan for a week with Pandit Banarsi Das Chaturvedi and Rev. C. F. Andrews introduced me to the Gurudeva. He spoke a few kind words to me. A humble individual like me could not expect more. But somehow the Poet retained a place for me in his great heart. A few years later, he sent me a set of his books, autographed by himself. I also had the privilege of hearing one of his sermons. It is needless to say that the memory of his saintly figure and his inspiring words is still green. But it is equally needless to say that such a brief acquaintance does not entitle me to speak about him with any pretension to authority nor does the fact that I have read a few of his works, one or two in the original Bengali, entitle me to make any serious attempt to do so.

There are scholars, both in India and abroad, who have made a life-long study of his speeches and writings. After all, such men do not belong to one country and the literature they create belongs to all men and all times. *Paramatma*, the Cosmic Spirit, which permeates and, at the same time, transcends everything, unfolds Himself in a myriad ways. The hopes and aspirations, the joys and sorrows, the yearnings and dim perceptions of Truth, experienced by living things, gods and men and the voice-less world of sub-human life, are all His experiences. And sometimes, at long intervals, there comes upon the scene a great poet, who clothes with words this inner world of thought and feeling. He then, not only, reveals humanity to itself but brings to it an awareness of its essential kinship with all that exists. The fact of this kinship, this bond of sympathy which holds us together in spite of a hundred distractions created by our petty loves and hatreds, is often taught and often forgotten. But the law of the jungle is not allowed completely to undo the work of the prophets: one sage follows another and the torch is kept burning

aloft. Of this race of prophets was Rabi Babu: he brought to us the eternal, ever-old and yet ever new, message of the world of the spirit, which knows no distinctions of race, caste, sex or creed. The Eastern world lay at the feet of the West and was struggling to win political independence and economic security. There seemed to be struggle and conflict all around but Rabindranath Tagore spoke, and was listened to, both by East and West. The anguish which his sensitive soul could not but feel for down-trodden humanity shamed even the aggressor and inspired the fighter for human rights with a courage which patriotism alone was not competent to create. The struggle was at once lifted to a higher plane and became a phase of the *Devāsura sangrama*, the eternal fight of the powers of light and the dark elemental forces of the nether world of the spirit.

A poet is not a more expert photographer: he does not merely reproduce what is in the hearts of men. He shares, even though partially, the knowledge of Reality which is the characteristic of *Ishvara*. It is significant that God is called *Kavi* in Vedic literature; *Kavi*, meaning not only a poet, a writer of verse, but an Artist. The universe-to-be comes to his mind as a Thought, which then translates itself as the multiplicity of names and forms which is this world. This Thought, this universe-in-embryo, is before Him in an eternal Present. He comprehends it, He is atone with it, at every moment. The *Yogi* shares God's knowledge in *Samadhi*. The true Artist also, at the moment when he is most truly himself, when he contemplates Nature-in-itself without taking the help of his everyday self of likes, dislikes, fancies and prepossessions, attains at least partial atonement with God and gets a glimpse of the Reality which no amount of book-lore can ever give. This is the source of his inspiration. He has come face to face with the Logos, which is not only the fountain-head of

words but Light and Power. That Rabi Babu was a true *Kavi*, a great Artist, in this sense needs no elaboration. His message did not proceed from the intellect, when you heard or read him, spirit spoke directly to spirit.

India had the rare good fortune of having two of her great sons living at the same time and the world shared this good fortune with her. Gandhiji, a *Mahatma*, if ever there was one, was with us at the time Tagore was inspiring us with his poetry. And he was also inspiring us, in his own way. The two men were the anti-thesis or, one had rather say, complementary to each other. Both appealed to the spiritual in man, the words of both carried a message of hope, of trust, of uplift. But the approaches were different; while Rabi Babu touched the æsthetic in man, sublimating his emotions and broadening his sympathies, Gandhiji quickened the spirit of *Tyaga* and *Tapasya*, self-sacrifice and austerity which is inherent in all men. Tagore showed that men must rise above their petty selves if they are to realise the True, the Good, the Beautiful. Gandhiji pointed out the path to such realization and made it clear that one can rise above his petty self by sacrificing himself for others, thus identifying himself with the Higher self, which envelopes and includes all selves. To put the idea in language which must be crude,

Tagore brought to us the message of that Beauty which lies behind this drab world of individualism and isolation and self-interest, Gandhiji brought to us the technique of realization: he showed us how by living and if need be by dying, for a noble ideal, effacing one's identity by identifying one's self with something higher, greater, in this case, the motherland, one glimpses that Beauty in which duality ceases to exist, at least for a time. By his apotheosis of Truth and Non-Violence, he made us tread the path of self-invited suffering, willingly borne without protest. This was the fire which burnt up the dross and converted ordinary men and women into heroes and martyrs.

A great personality like Rabi Babu reveals a hundred facets and I do not feel competent to deal with even one of them adequately. All that I can do is to offer my humble tribute of homage to the Poet, the Sage and Seer, who interpreted India's Soul to her when she was on the point of losing it through the impact of Western civilization and again brought to her that message which had been handed down, for countless centuries, from Seer to Seer. That message was first proclaimed in India but its cleansing breath purified all whom it touched and humanity was richer for all time for what Tagore has left it in the form of his deathless verse.

*Deliverance is not for me in renunciation,
I feel the embrace of freedom in a thousand
bonds of delight.
No I will never shut the doors of my senses,
The delight of sight and hearing and touch will
bear my delight.*

Rabindranath Tagore



India's Organ-Voice

HIRENDRA NATH MUKHERJEE, M.P.

WRITING for the Special Tagore Number of *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, the mind goes back to another special number it issued in commemoration of our Independence (1947), which included a reprint of the magnificent spur water-colour by Gaganendranath Tagore depicting Rabindranath at the Calcutta Congress of 1917, reading his great composition on "India's Prayer". The Poet, in his flowing robes and facing an enormous and eager audience, in the electric atmosphere of a momentous Congress session, represented, in this painting, as he always did in his stupendous life, the serenity and the strength of our India. If ever there has been a man of letters who was also, on any computation, a hero of history, that mantle was worn by Rabindranath Tagore. To him, in this year of the centenary of his birth, we all pay homage and Calcutta, fallen on evil days, affirms her pride in her greatest son.

This City of ours has not had a history to make very much of a song about. In a land where Purushapura and Pataliputra, not to speak of the amazing old cities of the India's Valley culture period, Calcutta is little more than a *parvenu*, the product of an uneasy liaison between native feudality and a foreign imperialism. However, this City of contradictories—"palace, byre, hovel, poverty and pride, side by side"—is spiritually also a monument at once to our shame and our boast, the shame of subjection to the foreigner and the boast of being the nursery and also the biggest bastion of our struggle for freedom. Though the roll of her history, Calcutta of ours is no mean city if she had given nothing to the world but Rabindranath Tagore, she would have been sure of a place among the elect in the hermits of men.

A hundred years ago, on the twenty-fifth of Vaisakh, the first month in our calendar, this great man was born in Calcutta. As his reminiscences (*Jeevan-smriti*) indicate, his growing-up was something of a miracle life in the great

Jorasanko house was, in some ways, a groove, and in others, an emancipation. If Rabindranath had chosen to find his abode in an ivory tower, to which transition was not too difficult from Jorasanko, if, with the facility of a precocious poet he had sought easy beatitude in isolation from his fellow-men and in embalmed leisure, there would have been little reason for surprise.

Our country, and the world, however, was happily spared that tremendous deprivation. Rooted in his native Bengal, nurtured in the spiritual opulence of a more sophisticated India, one of the world's greatest inter-nationalists responding superbly to the processes of thought and action in a quick-changing epoch, Rabindranath out-soared the shadow of the many contradictions that bedevilled Indian life and who in his time and achieved a poise and power that, in the history of man, is nearly unique.

There is no end to what can be said about this myriad-minded man, and one must be content with the little that can comprise the short space of an article. Let us in Calcutta, specially, recall how Rabindranath, from early boyhood, ached for his people, and like Keats, felt the misery of the world.

Is misery, and will not let them rest does not remember his references, half wistful, half vionic, to meetings he attended as a mere boy, vowing fidelity to the motherland and unceasing labour for her freedom, the mysterious conclave presided over by the fiery and lovable Rajnarayan Bose? It was in the Tagore house that the idea of a Hindu **mela** was born (1867) when Rabindranath was a child of six, and it is remarkable that in the ninth annual festival of the organization, whose object was the awakening of national feeling in our country, he made his first public appearance as a poet and recited one of his own compositions when in his teens, he was agonized by the "politics of beggary" that prevailed in his days, and in his songs he inveighed against it. But in spite of its limitations, the idea of the Indian

National Congress appealed to his sentiments, and when its Second Session (1886) was held in Calcutta, the poet then just turned twenty-five, sang the opening song which he had himself composed. When ten years later (1896) there was held another Congress Session in Calcutta, Rabindranath sat to music Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Vande Mataram* hymn (written in 1882) and sang it himself at its meeting.

He was allergic, however, to what he had called the politics of "petitious and supplications" and it was when the *Swadeshi* movement burst over Bengal in all its glory that he was out again in the very midst of his people, sharing their agonies and their ecstasies, himself joining demonstrations (as on the great *Rakhibandhan* day, October 30, of 1905), giving deep thoughts to problems relative to the life and labour of our people and expressing such thought magnificently in essays like in the one on *Swadeshi Samaj*, and perhaps above all, writing songs of patriotism that ever now tear the heart-strings that glow with patriotism of the deepest dye and pure of the dress least little taint of chaucerism, that one, for a fact, without a parallel in the literature of the world. Think of "La Marseillaise" or Shakespeare's "this sceptred isle, this royal throne of kings", and you will see the difference: Rabindranath's was the patriotism of a people that had come down indeed from its high pedestal in the past but whose culture resisted the cheap allurements of easy chaucerism.

The terrorist sequel of the *Swadeshi* movement rather repelled him, but that was only because he thought it was the frustrated and individualistic politics of desperation, courageous no doubt but in the larger sense pointless and futile. For the death-defying heroism of individual terrorists, he had nothing but the highest admiration: in so far as they gave us back our sense of manhood, they were, the poet well knew, the salt of the Indian earth. But the politics of those days, so-called "moderates" and "extremists" pursuing each other, and the finest of Bengal's youth driven by futility to insensate heroism, were too much for the poet. He came to know also a good deal more than he had bargained for, of the pettiness of professional politicians. It is no surprise that he

withdrew somewhat into his shell—not into inactivity, however, for this was the period when he wrote those gems of song which, in the English *Gitanjali*, for instance, in spite of the Bengali muse often refusing to yield her secret in foreign habiliments, brought him the plaudits of the world and his country the boost of which Indian nationalism stood so much in need.

Rabindranath had more than his share of the calumny and vituperation which, in a country degraded by years of subjection has been the portion of all remarkable and creative people. Quite apart from the few insensitive critics who maligned his literary work, there were even some mean enough to suggest maliciously that his *Jana-gana-mana* proudly acclaimed as free India's National Anthem, was written in order to glorify the rule of Britain; that the accusation was egregious and ludicrous at the same time did not deter his calumniators from flinging shovelful of mud in the hope that some of it at least would stick. A grateful country, however, has given the verdict, homage for Tagore and withering contempt for the calumniators.

During the dark days of World War I our poet went from country to country preaching India's age-old message, the message of peace among nations and goodwill among men. It needed great courage which the poet had in plenty, to point out the evils of exaggerated nationalism in a country like Japan which was blatant by nationalistic. When in the United States of America, where in many ways he felt thoroughly uncomfortable, he was pilloried for being anti-British, though he spoke in strains that were always perfectly in tune with his internationalism. As ever, of course, he felt in the marrow of his bones the woes of India's subjection, and when in April 1919 there took place the massacre at Jalianwala Bagh, it was Rabindranath Tagore who discarded his Knighthood and wrote to the then British Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, a historic letter which eloquently expressed the outraged feelings of the entire country. At Bolpur Shantiniketan, Tagore set up the Institution of his dreams, "where the world becomes a single nest" *Visvabharati*. But the fire that was in him of the proud Indian patriot never dimmed.

Thus it was that in spite of the closest friendship with Gandhiji, and the highest possible mutual respect between the two, the Poet never hesitated to give voice to his difference of view if the matters at issue were fundamental. He did not quite agree with what he thought the negative aspects of non-co-operation the ceremonial burning of foreign cloth seemed to him thoughtless and silly; Gandhiji's promise of *Swaraj* within a few months if only the people religiously turned the *Charkha* appeared to the Poet as a recipe for freedom which was neither proper nor dignified nor effective. He did not lose a moment in totally disapproving of Gandhiji's description of the Bihar earthquake of 1931 as God's punishment for the sins of Biharis. Differences notwithstanding, Curdeva and the Mahatma were twin souls symbolising the best in our land and it was only appropriate that when Gandhiji broke his historic fast in 1932 the poet was by his side to give him the strength and the solace of his resentment.

Recently, Jawaharlal Nehru has said that while he has lived and worked in the shadow of the Mahatma, he has felt spiritually nearer to Tagore. Like a benignant banyan tree, Tagore has given shade and sustenance to his people of varying tempers. Like Jawaharlal, Subhas Chandra Bose, in many ways contrary to the former, never lacked the blessing of the poet; once Tagore in a memorable letter, hailed him as Bengal's undisputed leader and went gladly, at his call, to lay the foundation of Mahajati Sadan.

There is no space here of referring to the Poet's tireless pilgrimage from country to country in the East and the West, but it is good to recall that Mussolini, Fascist dictator of Italy, had by false pretences managed to secure some words of praise from the Poet, but when, on learning the real facts from Romain Rolland, he withdrew what he had said before, the dictator's paper *Popolo d'Italia* wrote of Tagore as "this unctuous and insupportable fellow" "the dishonest Tartuffe whom the idiocy of others promoted to the stature of greatness". In 1929, an American Official asked Tagore if he could read and write, an incident which made the poet cancel his visit to U.S. Universities. No poet in history has, in his life time,

won so much acclaim in dissimilar lands, he also had his fill of abuse—some early mirrors life Ezra Pound turning bitterly cynical—and this indeed is a tribute to the clarity of his message.

Everyone knows of his "Letters from Russia" (1930) of which the English translation banned by the British Government.

"What stupendous heroism" he felt at Soviet Russia: "if I had kept away from the world's greatest and most historical festival (*Yajna*) I could never have forgiven myself. From Russia in 1930, he sent a message to India to prepare for greater ordeals—it was the peak of Gandhiji's second great movement for freedom—and said: "we belong, to be sure, to the hungry and helpless of the world".

There was a new exhilaration and strenuousness in all that Tagore wrote and did after 1930, a remarkable thing when one remembers that he was then nearly seventy. His voice was raised more nobly for Indian freedom and the freedom of all the world—another voice in the world of art was raised so unequivocally against Fascism which, between the two world wars, menaced civilization. Stung by imperialist infamy in India the great man cried out in 1932 to the God of his faith: "

*Have you forgiven those who poison
your air and blot out your light
Can you give them your love?*

And among the best work of his last five years (1936-41) are poems like "To Africa", which to-day seem so poignantly true and deeply moving. Who among the world's great men has castigated with Tagore's *vishi*-like wrath, the foul misdeeds of avoid Imperialism in Africa:

*Whose fierceness was keener than the
fangs of your wolf
Whose pride was blinder than your
lightless forest*

Our myriad-minded Poet was, indeed, India's organ-voice, and not only India's but of the conscience and sensitivity of the whole wide world. His is, indeed, a name to resound through ages, a name that our City of Calcutta is ever so proud to clasp to herself. What the future has in store for Calcutta seems these days somewhat doubtful, but the name of Tagore and the perfume of his fame will last as long as breath endures.

Rabindranath

A legend and a symbol

SUDHANSU MOHAN BANERJEE



ON the last day of the last month of the last century, a poet sang :—

“Thy morning waits behind the patient
dark of the East, Meek and silent.
Keep watch, India.

Bring your offerings of worship for that
sacred sunrise.

Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in
your voice and sing

Come, Peace, thou daughter of God's own
great suffering.

Come with thy treasure of contentment,
the sword of fortitude.

And meekness crowning thy forehead.

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand
before the proud and the powerful

With your white robe of simpleness.

Let your crown be of humility, your
freedom the freedom of the soul.

Build God's throne daily upon the ample
bareness of your poverty

And know that what is huge is not great
and pride is not everlasting.”

These simple words breathing the faith and hope of a free soul were uttered by a man of letters who was still comparatively—unknown in his own land and was yet to burst on the bigger canvas. It was almost the last lines of a legacy which the Nineteenth Century bequeathed to the Twentieth Century in India. The oracle through whom this message was radiated was Rabindranath Tagore whom the world came subsequently to know as a poet and a prophet, as an artist and a philosopher, as a creative seer and an apostle of international understanding. The Archbishop of Upala introducing him before the Swedish Academy said “The Nobel prize for literature is intended for the writer who combines in himself the artist and the prophet. None has fulfilled these conditions

better than Rabindranath Tagore.” Yet misgivings were many at the time. A paper on the other side of the Atlantic wrote : “It will take time for us to accommodate ourselves to the idea that any one called Rabindranath Tagore should receive a world prize for literature. The name has a curious sound. The first time we saw it in print it did not seem real.” It was openly hinted also that Prince William of Sweden who had visited the Tagores earlier and was convinced of the ‘poet's loathing of British rule’ was responsible for this award and people openly recalled that the other competitors that year were Thomas Hardy and Anatole France and that the Nobel Committee had not had the time to award the prize to Tolstoy, Zola or Strindberg. Writing many years later an English commentator of a Tagore Volume wrote—

“In 1914 when Mr. Yeats found that the prose translations of the poet's Gitanjali had stirred his blood as nothing had for years, he could not help regretting that he knew nothing of their author's life nor of the movements that had made them possible. Scarcely had any one at that time, outside Bengal, heard even the name of the poet-philosopher. Today the case is very different ; his name is greeted with enthusiasm, wonder and reverence in almost every part of the civilized world, and pictures of him are to be found in thousands of homes. In most of the great cities of both hemispheres surging crowds have been held spell-bound by the melody of his voice, even when they did not understand the language of his addresses or recitations ; larger numbers have been fascinated by his refined and well-chiselled lineaments, which together with his silver locks, his flowing beard, his eyes full of mystic inspiration, and his long and loose robes, have recalled to their minds the vision of a pro-

phet of Judea or of a seer of ancient India. No poet, ancient or modern, has been received during his life time with the honour and respect with which Dr. Tagore has been greeted, whether in the West or in the East, and there is scarcely any cultivated language into which some, at least, of his works have not been translated."

So here was a poet of the East whom the West accepted with mixed feelings. Was he a product of the West? Was he a product of the assimilative forces at work or was he merely the East speaking to the West? Did the West accept him merely as a poet, as a literary man, as a writer of short stories and novels or was he more accepted as a philosopher, a prophet, a preacher for the under-dog and the have-nots?

His very last words on the "Crisis of Civilization" still ring in our ears. "As I look around, I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in history." The poet had always claimed a rapprochement not only between East and West but between its materialistic development and technological order and its spiritual aesthetic and artistic experiment. How did this happen and why? For an answer, even if partial, for a true poet is born and not made, we have to delve into the history of the Nineteenth Century Bengal, the poet's family environment, his great love for the ideals of the past coupled with his catholicity of mind, emotional receptiveness, his personal contact with the West, its art, mind, literature and culture, its rationalistic approach, its scientific outlook, its spirit of quest and enquiry. Added to these fundamentals were the influences of an Upanishadic monism, Vaishnavic dualism, Buddhist way of life, an esoteric-idealism and a pagan abandon. This curious amalgam produced a rare refreshing vintage. It was a cocktail of many spirits but fundamentally on a base which though autochthonous was a revaluation of values. It ultimately took shape in a philosophy of life whose best exposition was in the theme of the Divinity of Humanity and Humanity of Divinity. His *Jivandeavata*, that ever-evolving personality gradually merged himself in the Universal Man whose great prophet he was in the

Hibbert Lectures. Whatever the mental process was, it was a saga of faith in humanity, which said in poetic terms—I believe in Man, I deny the negation of Man. Critics would however say that his pathetic belief in Man the great was not a belief that Man was an end in himself. His concept of Man was centred round the theory that Man formed a part of the transcendental world. That concept was bound to differ in spirit, though not much in practice from that brand which arose from an ethical union, from a concept of society based on values liberated from the time honoured spiritual bondage. To-day's humanism would speak of a rediscovery of the essence of Man's nature. It was not to believe but to question and enquire. Man was a focal point there also but his reason was a biological heritage and not a metaphysical category. Tagore's approach to world problems was considerably tinged by this specific outlook. It was in addition an imaginative and not a pragmatic approach. That is why perhaps he could not be as realistic as Gorky or Bernard Shaw would be, or as analytic as Rolland or a Russell. He was guided more by heart and imagination than by intellect and experience. He sensed an invisible bond of life between creation and creator and even between an animate and an inanimate. This was an anathema to modern mind but to Tagore it was a living legend and symbol in the true Indian tradition. After all, even an atheist or an agnostic realizes that human mind is hungry for something deeper in terms of normal and spiritual development or as Jawaharlal Nehru points out—anything which raises man above his normal level, gives the human personality a new dimension of spiritual quality and moral depth.

It was in the days when his father Debendranath was mentally unhappy that Maharshi came across that famous text of the Upanishads in a torn leaf—"God pervades everything. It is by renunciation that you can enjoy. Don't be greedy—Don't hanker after other's wealth. That was the great *Mantra* which he got and tried to realise it in his life, in his own way. We are reminded of Rabindranath's own description of his father when as a boy he accompanied him to Dalhousie—"Stars in the dark dim lit sky, faint flicker of a misty dawn silhouetted in the background, Maharshi in deep meditation facing the

seemed to be one with that serene atmosphere of calm and peace."

In more than one sense his great son Rabindranath was not merely a chip of the old block but a real fulfilment of the Maharshi in a more equal and aesthetic way. Maharshi got this sacred torch from Rammohun and he handed it to his great son in an inspirational way. We have Abanindranath's story of two searchers. It is a blazing hot summer noon; Maharshideva is proceeding along Birbhum uplands in a palanquin. The bearers had got tired. They left the palanquin at a particular spot. Maharshideva found—before his eyes, a vast and unexplored expanse of a prairie like meadow. He did not know that he saw under the spreading Chatim tree. Did he see the one that stood alone like a giant tree? From his heart's most depth came the words which are inscribed on the multi-coloured glass temple which he erected there. "He is the comfort of my life, the solace of my mind, the peace of my heart." The second searcher also strove through the forest and rhyme, through song and deed, for the synthesis—where the world would become the best and the abode of peace. "Shantiniketan flowered into an institution like Visvabharati to study the Mind of Man in its realisation of different aspects of Truth from diverse points of view—to seek to realise in a common fellowship the meeting of the East and the West—from all antagonism of race, nationality, religion or caste and in the name of the one Supreme God who is Shantam, Shivam, Adwaitam, the Peace, the All God and the One." Thus the first significance of Shantiniketan was the urge for an inner growth in a quiet environment which Maharshi had inspired. To Rabindranath brought a variety, a colour, a synthesis, a big canvas. He was faced with a practical problem how to educate his own child in an atmosphere of love and living. He had while ministering his estate, seen the imperative need not only of a revitalised rural economy but a balanced collective life also, coupled as it was with the dead weight of a subject race which was cruel to a sensitive soul like his. Thus the Maharshi's eternal quest and endless urge and eternal longing were metamorphosed into a practical building up of not only boys and girls

but also of men and women in a society where political power was nil, social adjustment difficult and economic stability precarious. With the evolution of Shantiniketan and Sriniketan to Visvabharati it took a wider shape of international accord. That was its third stage in evolution. But there was a difference. This belief in internationalism did not mean a sacrifice of the individual. Tagore never considered the individual as an automaton, an instrument in the hand of a party caucus or a proletariat or even an educational machine. An individual was a transformer of matter and transmuter of experience.

Against this bigger canvas we have to evaluate his march into the arena of the twentieth century and his concept of 'Religion of Man' as it developed. It was essentially a poet's evolution of a doctrine that was in seed there—it was the divinity of humanity and humanity of divinity as he expressed himself in his famous Hibbert Lectures on the same subject. This idea of the humanity of our God or the divinity of Man, the Eternal as he himself tells us did not grow in his mind through any process of philosophical reasoning. But in his mental composition and intellectual poise several influences had worked from early boyhood of which first and foremost was the nineteenth century impact which his family had imbibed to which I have already drawn attention.

In the history of modern India, the story of Nineteenth Century Bengal was more than significant. It was true that by the tenth Century we had achieved a deeper unity from sea to sea and land to land. From the snow capped Himalays down to Cape Comorin, from Kamrupa to Gujrat we would talk of the same Siva, Vishnu or Devi, the same law of Karma, of the same Vedas and Upanishads. Even the advent of such a dynamic force as Islam immediately afterwards did not put this concept in reverse gear though it was only a federation of thought and social order and not an active political concept. India remained a geographical name and her outward history did not go beyond the stage of racial and dynastic chronicles. The two hundred years of Mughal Rule, of course gave to the whole of Northern India and part of Deccan also one unity in official language, administrative system, currency, coinage and a popular *lingua franca* but

as Dr. Jadunath Sarkar had said that by the 18th century it was like a spent bullet. Just at this time the West struck India with irresistible impact. What were the results of this shake up? a political consolidation, an economic readjustment, a sociological upheaval, an intellectual flowering. There was agrarian dissatisfaction too, typified in indigo riots, Titu Mia's revolt, Santhal rebellion, etc. But the curious part of it was that at the same time it led to an open admiration for Western knowledge and scientific outlook. There was however not that psychological displacement which we find elsewhere in history mainly because of three reasons—(1) the growth of an intellectual middle class which had its nebulous existence from the days of Man Sinha and Todarmal, Murshid Kuli Khan and Clive, factors and factories, Banians and Dewans who could not be swamped off their feet without argument, (2) the inner virility of the Indian culture, both Hindu and Mahomedan, the Hindu more for its assimilative and Catholic tendencies and Mahomedan more for its vigorous and entrenched beliefs, (3) the more liberal British policy compared with other colonial powers. The result was that within a measurable time after the transition of power consolidation not merely political but intellectual too had begun. This early era of 19th century was an age of remarkable activity. Not only was law and order maintained, and rule of law established, but *Suttee* was prohibited, *Thuggee* suppressed, pindaris crushed, judiciary respected, education broad-based and trade and commerce flourished. There was some aggressive anglicism but also a steady diffusion of European learning "freshing April showers of early knowledge." Raja Ram Mohan became a legend and Hindu College a symbol though Ram Mohan might not have been directly connected with it. It had begun with 450 students and their receptivity was amazing. As an example it may be cited that it was a student of Hindu College—Kashi Nath Ghosh who first protested against Mill's history and his denunciation that Hindus were not a civilized people. Of course the Missionaries were active, they diffused light, there had been converts too, but for the reasons stated above it was never a success in the way it was intended to be. The Post-Bentinck period up to the Mutiny (i.e. imme-

diately after the passing away of Rammohan, Dwarkanath and the decision to introduce English as the medium of education and later the establishment of a Medical College) was the age of angry young men like Michael Madhusudan and Reverend Krishnamohan, Radhanath Sikdar and others. Bhudeb was an exception. The Mutiny may not have been the first spearhead of a national movement but there is no doubt that it shattered the old order and in its process shook up the new too, to an extent which is not realized. It was as historians point out a heterogeneous conglomeration of explosive elements and a curious mixture of dissidents from the deposed Mogul to a popular agrarian rebel like Kanwar Sain, from a distinguished feudal lord like Nana Sahib to a free booter who fished in every troubled waters. The idea did not thrive in Bengal. The reason was more than one. An economic sufficiency was developing. Calcutta was becoming the centre of the newly rich. A cultural atmosphere was growing and there was a realization by contact with the West, its art, literature, science and philosophy that India was coming into contact with a charged intellectual mine and it would be wrong to push back the hand of the clock. Side by side, beneath the froth and ferment of a tremendous impact was an attempt to resurrect our own heritage, revive them and place them in a new setting. The result was a harmonious assimilation without losing the basic values. This reorientation could be possible only because of the inner vitality of Indian thought and culture. In the rise of the Brahmo School of Thought which was more of the classes than the masses and which was more a reformation than a rebellion, we brought back the old Upanishadic monotheism which we had almost forgotten. In the Hindu revival movement that followed and gained its momentum we had time to put order in our own house, reappraise the old customs and traditions. Bankim, Vivekananda and others were the pioneers in this line of progress. A question may be posed whether the Ramkrishna Vivekananda movement was a counter-reformation like its counterpart in the catholic world or a new assimilative force in itself arising out of the flux. We find paradoxically that with the growth of votaries of English, Sanskrit as a classical subject was not neglect-

ed. Rather, Rammohan's insistence on Vedanta studies, the efforts of Debendranath in the Tattva-sadhini Sabha, Vachaspati's lexicon, monumental translations of Mahabharata, Bangabasi's efforts to publish many Shastric texts are remarkable. It was something more than a pattern like similarity with the interest taken in Greek and Latin in Europe. Again social reform was another facet of nineteenth century Bengal, beginning with the stoppage of Suttee. Widow remarriage, attempts to prevent multimarriage, and introduce monogamy and civil marriage, raising of the age of consent, invectives against the dowry system, temperance societies, all tend to show a social ferment at work. But its biggest flowering was in Art and Literature and in the growth of a social and political consciousness. It gave a new life to Bengali thought and diction, its prose and poetry. It began in the Babus' era i.e., its patrons were the new rich people who had amassed wealth with the growth of the British trade and were in the process of being converted into a leisured landowning class and absentee landlords—a buffer erected more in the interest of the administration than in the interest of the people or the ryots. Throughout the nineteenth century agrarian dissatisfaction, from the days of the Indigo Planters right up to the tenancy legislation was gradually gaining a momentum. As Sri Aurobindo sums it up—'From the meeting of a foreign art and civilisation with a temperament differing from the temperament which created them, there issues as there usually does from such meeting an original art and an original civilisation. Originality does not lie in rejecting outside influences but in accepting them as new mould into which our individuality may run. That is what happened in Bengal'. The nineteenth century movement was therefore more a discovery than a rediscovery, a nascence than a renaissance. Rabindranath was not only the typical representative of this age, but transcended it and reoriented it. In his thoughts and writings not only was the individual aim and collective flux reflected but the deeper synthesis and harmony also which found expression later in the establishment of an abode of peace where in the poet's own words 'the mind would be without fear and the head held high, where the knowledge would be free where the clear stream of

reason would not lose its way into dreary sand of dead habit, where life was not merely to be meditative but would be fully awake in its activities, where boys' minds would not be perpetually drilled, where the sunrise and the sunset would not be daily ignored, where nature's festivities of flowers and fruit would have their joyous recognition, where people would be bidden to realize Man's world as God's kingdom.' That was the nineteenth century thought which the poet brought to a twentieth century audience in America. It grew and grew in his mind and it took shape into not merely an international universality but also in the symbol of Man and developed as a religion of humanity of which he spoke in Oxford to a war weary Europe. And unto the last he never lost faith in that big Man whom he recognised as His only God. He said :—

"The solitary enjoyment of the Infinite in meditation no longer satisfied me and the texts which I used for my silent worship lost their inspiration without my knowing it. I am sure I vaguely felt that my need was spiritual self-realization in the life of Man through some disinterested service."

Again he said :—

"Who is my God

Whom I have worshipped so long
Is He the same whose name we hear

everywhere
Whose praise we read in every language
and scrip

Whom we so fondly fancy and dream
As the only one to be adored.

Do I worship Him because I want to
prove Him so

To-day, I feel, I have failed,
He has not been proved in my life.

.....
I tried to find Man within a limit
I lost him there
I found him boundless across
The frontiers of race, country and clime
I told him with folded palms
O Thou Man, the Eternal who is in all men
O Thou, who transcend all humanity
Save me from the narrow meshes of
separatism, ignorance and arrogance.

.....
Day after day I sing and in my song
Stands stored creation's first sob,
I want to come out
Life is light
And in the last refrain, I cease not to
sing again
Life is love
Creation's world is still a-thirst"
.....(Writer's translation).

Nineteenth Century cult of humanism and positivism reinforced by a Upanishadic richness and a poetic faith evolved into a rational and scientific outlook of the twentieth and his last words still ring, even through the disillusionment of two world wars, "I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man."

In an age of hate and spite, of nuclear bombardment and atomic fission, of robots and washing, of interspace travel and marvels of science, this faith is still supreme. Man holds the field. He is still not an automaton. He still creates. His longing for magnitude is still an aspiration for the great and not a man for the big. In essence this was the nineteenth century legend which the poet reoriented in twentieth century symbol, a sage of faith for humanity.

"Where can I meet thee unless in this
home made thing? Where can I
meet thee unless in this my work transference
into thy work?.....
Thou without me and I without thee
nothing."

VISVA-BHARATI

Visva-Bharati represents India, where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Visva-Bharati acknowledges India's obligations to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India's right to accept from others their best. The Western universities give their students an opportunity to learn what all the European peoples have contributed to their Western culture. Thus, the intellectual mind of the West has been luminously revealed to the world. What is needed to complete this illumination is for the East to collect its own scattered lamps and offer them to the enlightenment of the world.

Robinranath Tagore

Tagore in Soviet Union

Y. CHELYSHEV,

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S name is widely known and revered in the Soviet Union. His books, translated into the languages of the USSR, are to be found in millions of Soviet homes. What makes his works so popular in the Soviet Union? Why is he so dear to the Soviet people?

Sincere and true friends of the Indian people, the Soviet people followed with heartfelt sympathy the heroic struggle of the Indians for their National Independence—during which struggle the voice of Tagore rose and reverberated over India like the peal of a tocsin, filling the hearts of the people with faith and hope in their future victory.

Tagore's exceptionally diverse and indefatigable activities played a great role in the awakening of the people's consciousness, besides developing and enriching their culture and art.

This is one of the reasons why the Soviet people, who deeply sympathise with the struggle of the peoples of the world over against the forces of colonialism and reaction, rate so highly Tagore and his works.

Well-versed in all the aspects of his people's life, Tagore truthfully and vividly reflected it in his work, comprehensive in volume and resplendent in ideological and aesthetic content. He threw open the window to India, as it were, and invited humanity to have a look at his land.

At that time the British colonialists tried to set up artificial obstacles in the way of the developing friendship and mutual understanding between the people of the USSR and India. But through Tagore's novels, stories, verses, songs and plays, the Soviet people were able to obtain a vivid insight into the Indian people's spiritual world and rich culture—their dreams, hopes and aspirations, their needs, adver-

sities and suffering, their eternal yearning for the ideals of Good and Justice. They found in Tagore's literary heritage a grand epic, a veritable encyclopaedia of the Indian people's life, revealing their inner world and reproducing unforgettable pages from its recent past. Shortly after the advent of Soviet power, in 1923, A. V. Lunacharsky, the first People's Commissar of Public Education, appraised the significance of Tagore in the development of world culture as follows:

"... Tagore's works ... are so replete with colours, fine shades of spiritual emotions, and truly generous ideas that they now constitute one of the treasures of human culture."

Reflecting reality and replete with patriotic ideas, Tagore's books bear eloquent testimony to the writer's kinship with his people. They remind some of the modern writers who strive to divorce literature from social and political life, about their duty to their people, their place in the ranks of the champions of social progress, peace and democracy.

The Soviet people take great care to preserve the best traditions of their national culture, and bear deep respect for the cultures of other people. That is why they prize so highly Tagore's efforts made at the crucial moment in his country's period of colonial rule and ideological chaos, to bring home to the Indian intellectuals the need to preserve the national traditions of their people and at the same time to master the foremost achievements of science and culture gained by humanity.

The Soviet people appreciate and revere Tagore for his lofty humanism, his love for the ordinary people, his desire to help men uphold

their dignity and faith in their strength and ability.

Rabindranath Tagore is dear to us also because he was not only a patriot of his own country, but also a friend of all the ordinary people of the world. The Soviet people can understand these sentiments, since the unity of the ideas of patriotism and internationalism is one of the paramount sources and motive forces of the Soviet society's development.

The Soviet people respect Tagore also because he was alien to all aggressions and wars, coercion and exploitation. He boldly spoke up against fascism and militarism in all their forms and manifestations, castigated the Japanese militarism for its aggression against China, exposed the Italian fascists who were waging a barbarous war against the peoples of Ethiopia, censured the French colonialists for their war against the freedom-loving people of Syria. He firmly believed that the time would come when there would no longer be any wars, slavery or oppression on earth.

Very popular in the USSR is his poem, "Africa", in which he exposed "the savage greed of the civilised" and branded the colonialists who exploited the people of a whole continent with a fierceness keener than the fangs of African wolves. "Ask for her forgiveness !" he exclaimed at the end of this poem.

His appeal is equally significant today when all progressive mankind is protesting against the horrors of a new war, and championing, universal disarmament and eternal peace and friendship among the peoples. Tagore's passionate appeal for peace among nations and his angry condemnation of the war-mongers—"the gluttons who lust for flesh, the traffickers in festering carrion"—has a special ring for the Soviet people who have always loved peace and hated war.

The Soviet people regard Rabindranath Tagore as their great and sincere friend. It was in those grim years of colonial reaction when any attempt to tell the Indians the truth about the Soviet Union was ruthlessly persecuted that the great Indian writer decided to visit the USSR.

He awaited his chance to pay this visit with great impatience. "And now," he said at that

time "when your people have become so new and different from what they were as my friends tell me, I am all the more impatient to go. I want to know your music, your theatre, your dances, your literature." At another time he declared. "I do not want to die without seeing the Soviet Union".

Finally, his wish came true, and on September 11, 1930 he arrived in Moscow.

His visit to the Soviet Union was of truly historical import : it opened a new era in the development of the relations between the Indian and the Soviet peoples, and in a large measure mapped out the further steps in mutual understanding : friendship and co-operation between India and the USSR during the next few decades.

What Tagore saw in the Soviet Union 30 years ago, during the hard days of struggle for the consolidation of the first socialist state, deeply stirred him. Speaking before Soviet writers, he said :

"I am thrilled by the fact that you are the first to have given the people a chance to study, to open before them the doors of schools, theatres and museums.

"I dream of a free man of labour. The present civilization is suffering from diseases and abnormalities. It must be cured. I am convinced that your idea is very much like my dream. You are building up a creative individuality, that I, by myself, could not do. Therein lies your immortal service to mankind."

Tagore was able to stay only for two weeks in the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, he tried to learn the different aspects of Soviet life : he met and spoke with workers, peasants, writers, scientists, public figures, artists, actors, teachers, students and school children. At a meeting with peasants at the Central Peasants House, he said :

"If we learn by your experience, we shall be able to solve the peasant problem in India in the most effective way."

He told his large Soviet audiences about his country and replied to numerous questions, striving to disclose the finest pages of culture and art of the Indian peoples.

Speaking at a big farewell meeting at the Hall of Columns of the Trade Union House in Moscow, he said :



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A STUDY

By H. Mozunder

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ

শ্রী : হেমেন্দ্রনাথ মজুমদার,

"I also dream of a time when it will be possible for my country of ancient Aryan civilization likewise to receive the great blessing of education and equal opportunities for all people. I am grateful, sincerely grateful to all of you who have helped me to see in concrete forms the dream which I had long nurtured in my imagination, the dream of liberating eternally-bound human reason !"

In an interview to correspondents of numerous newspapers on his way back home Tagore highlighted the great vital force of the Soviet Socialist State, the enormous changes in the life of the Soviet people. The bourgeois West European papers printed these interviews under sensational headlines such as "Tagore—Friend of the Russians," and "An Indian—Friend of the Russians." Tagore's voice, resounding to the remotest corners of the globe, was heard by millions of ordinary people everywhere.

In his "Letters About Russia" published in 1931, Rabindranath Tagore told in vivid and simple terms the truth about the Soviet Union, its economical and cultural achievements, the great reforms put through by Soviet society during the first decade of its existence. In his opinion one of the finest features of the Soviet society was the moral unity of the Soviet people inspired by the ideas of building socialism.

"After travelling in Russia I am to-day going to America," he wrote in one of his letters, "but I am still gripped by the memory of Russia. The point is that none of the other countries I visited stirred my imagination to such a degree."

In his "Letters About Russia" Tagore, time and again, compared what the Soviet Government was doing at that time for the material, social and spiritual upliftment of the Soviet people to what the British colonialists in India were doing to rob India and retard the spiritual development of the Indian people in the name of maintenance of "law and order". And naturally, this comparison was considered as "highly objectionable" by the British colonialists. It is not surprising, therefore, that the colonialist censors did not permit

the publication of Tagore's book in an English translation.

Everybody knows with what deep sympathy Tagore in his last days regarded the great patriotic war of the Soviet people against the Fascist aggressors. Even a few days before his death in July 1941, he said : "I am certain they will win !"

Tagore's splendid life-asserting art, which combined the finest traditions of Indian literature with the new trends that were filling the literature of the Indian peoples with realistic content and facilitating its progressive democratic development, exercised a beneficent influence on the culture of many countries : it aroused the great interest and appreciation of the Soviet people.

Rabindranath Tagore's name became known to the Russians before the Great October Socialist Revolution. The first Russian translations of his works appeared in 1913. In 1914-1916 two small editions of his works were published simultaneously in the Russian language.

After the October Revolution a new fuller edition of Tagore's Selected Works, edited by M. I. Tubyansky, was published in 1926.

Large-scale comprehensive work was begun on the study and translation of Tagore's books in the USSR after India attained Independence. The training of Indologists in the Soviet Union made it possible to translate the works of Tagore into Russian and the other languages of the peoples of the USSR not from the English translations but directly from their original in Bengali. In 1956 a new eight-volume edition of Tagore's works was put out in the Russian language. Separate volumes of his verses and stories, novels and plays are published from time to time. In all some 25,00,000 copies of books by Tagore have come off the Soviet press.

Tagore's work has enriched the culture of the Soviet Union and serves the noble cause of developing friendly cultural relations between the Soviet Union and India.

*The Sun brings from across the dark
The voice that awakens the man
In the bosom of One Light.*

—Tagore



Rabindranath

Poet and Seer

KEDAR NATH CHATTERJI

SOME little while ago, while taking a comprehensive look—for the first and last time for most of us—at the magnificent archaeological remains at Nagurjunakonda, one of us remarked that the official guide book, published by the Publicity Department of the Government of India, contained many laches and lapses and was evidently written by one who had not gone deeply and properly into the subject. Our guide, who was no less a person than the retired Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Mr. Ramchandram, who was then engaged as the Special Officer-in-charge of guiding the final excavations and collecting the materials for a museum and a monograph, smilingly quoted a Sanskrit verse to this effect :—"Why ask *Hanuman* about *Samudra* (the seas), he only crossed it in one leap. Ask *Mainaka* the winged mountain, who stays deeply immersed in it."

The same might be said almost all the persons who have attempted to make a complete survey of either the life and works or the personality of Rabindranath Tagore. For one thing his personality—vital, intensely brilliant and impressive as it was—contained complex depths beyond the reach of most of those who came into contact with him. And for another his activities, spread over a long and intellectually fruitful life-span, covered an extra-ordinarily wide stretch of cultural and educational fields, too vast to be fully surveyed from any single standpoint of view, Eastern or Western, Indian or non-Indian. Even the biography of Rabindranath written by one who has been in Santiniketan for many decades, can only be called an approximation, not free from lapses.

This year the centenary of his birth is being celebrated in many different countries and places, all over the world. Many writers and critics of note have written special articles for the occasion, which have appeared in literary journals and cultural publications, published here and abroad. Some of them show deep appreciation

of some aspect of Rabindranath's life and works, others are of the usual laudatory type, garnished with the usual quotations and references to past events. A few have appeared in the opposite vein, mostly from Indian writers whose objective has been to gain cheap self-advertisement and notoriety as is clearly in evidence if we analyse the flimsy basis of almost all of their arguments. There is no need to go into the details of the derogatory articles, as that would provide the writers with the publicity for which they are athirst. But as some of them has been trying to prove that Rabindranath's muse was Western in origin only garbed in Eastern robes, it might be useful to consider the opinion of others on that subject. But let us, first of all consider what Rabindranath himself had to say about it.

We find in the Chapter entitled "*The Teacher*" in his *Religion of Man*, which is a presentation of his Hibbert Lectures delivered at Oxford in 1930, a clear account of internal conflicts that he had experienced from the early days of his youth, which moulded his thoughts as a Poet and thinker, through the years of his adolescence into those of maturity. It is not possible to quote at length from that chapter, but it is all there for those who want to read.

After describing the urge he felt within himself, which led to the founding of the school at Santiniketan, he says—

"This brings to my mind the name of another poet, of ancient India, *Kalidasa*, whose poem of *Meghaduta* reverberates with the music of the sorrow of an exile."

"It was not the physical home-sickness from which the poet suffered, it was something far more fundamental, the home-sickness of the soul. We feel from almost all his works the oppressive atmosphere of the kings' palaces of those days, dense with things of luxury, and also with the callousness of self-indulgence, albeit an atmos-

phere of refined culture based on an extravagant civilization."

Then after describing the feelings of Kalidasa, banished from "the immediate presence of the eternal", he says :—

"What was the form in which his desire for perfection persistently appeared in his drama and poems ? It was the form of the *tapovana*, the forest dwelling of the patriarchal community of ancient India. Those who are familiar with Sanskrit literature will know that this was not a colony of people with a primitive culture and mind". After describing the nature of the life and thoughts of the *tapovana* dwellers, which he sums up with an excerpt from the upanishads*, with its English rendering by himself, he goes on to say :—

"It was never a philosophy of renunciation of a negative character, but a realization completely comprehensive. *How the tortured mind of Kalidasa in the prosperous city of Ujjaini*, and the glorious period of Vikramaditya, closely pressed by all-obstructing things and all devouring self, let his thoughts hover round the vision of a *tapovana* for his inspiration of life !"

In the very next paragraph he compares his own mental conflicts with that of Kalidasa thus :—

It was not a deliberate copy but a natural coincidence that a poet of modern India† also had the similar vision when he felt within him the misery of a spiritual banishment. In the time of Kalidasa people vividly believed in the ideal of *tapovana*, the forest colony, and there can be no doubt that even in the late age there were communities of men living in the heart of nature, not ascetics fiercely in love with a lingering suicide, but men of serene sanity who sought to realize the spiritual meaning of their life."

He then goes on to say that while the *tapovana* ideal carried a meaning that was part of the living faith of that age, to-day that idea

has lost any definite outline of reality and has retreated into the far-away phantom land of legend. And therefore, in order to be in consonance with the modern conditions of life the poet has to reconstruct the idea so that it could be the same in truth, but not identical in fact. "It was this urge which led our poet to bring in the spirit of the *tapovana*, for which his heart was yearning, in his poems which were composed in tangible words."

Of modern conditions, in his time, he says :— "In our highly complex modern conditions mechanical forces are organized with such efficiency that materials are produced that grow far in advance of man's selective and assimilative capacity to simplify them into harmony with his nature and needs".

"Such an intemperate overgrowth of things, like rank vegetation in tropics, creates confinement for man."

He thus comes to the conclusion that man is thus "building his cage, fast developing his parasitism on the monster thing, which he allows to envelop him on all sides. He is always occupied in adapting himself to its dead angularities, limits himself to its limitations, and merely becomes a part of it".

He is well aware that his conclusions run counter to "the doctrine of those who believe that a constant high pressure of living, produced by an artificially cultivated hunger of things, generates and feeds the energy that drives civilization upon its endless journey. Personally, I do not believe that this has ever been the principal driving force that has led to eminence any great civilization of which we know in history."

In giving an account of his own family environment he says :—

My own ancestors came floating to Calcutta upon the earliest tide of the fluctuating fortune of the East Indian Company. The unconventional tide of life for our family has been a con-

*Te Sarvagam Sarvatah prapya dhira

Yuktatmanah Sarvamevavisanti

(Those men of serene mind enter into the All, having realised and being in union everywhere with the Omnipresent Spirit).

†Rabindranath himself.

fluence of three cultures, the Hindu, Moham-
medan and British. My grandfather belonged to
that period when amplitude of dress and courtesy
and a generous leisure were gradually being
clipped and curtailed into Victorian manners,
economical in time, in ceremonies and in the
dignity of personal appearance. *"This will show
that I came to a world in which the modern city-
bred spirit of progress had just begun driving its
triumphed car over the luscious green life of our
accustomed village community. Though the tram-
pling process was almost complete round me, yet
the wailing cry of the past was still lingering over
the wreckage."*

Enough has been quoted, I believe, to show
that Rabindranath's concept of all that is of the
essence in human life and aspirations was, clearly
and unmistakably, Eastern and if anything,
distinctly ancient Indian in origin. Let us now
turn to the opinion of others on the subject.

The Golden Book of Tagore, which was pub-
lished on the occasion of the celebration of
Rabindranath's completion of the seventieth
year of his life, is replete with the opinions of
eminent writers of the West, who found in his
writing the unmistakable voice of the East and
of thinkers of our own country who found the
finest interpretations of our ancient and eternal
sentiments in his poetry and prose. But then
those were the opinions of a past age, and so let
us turn to those of to day. It will suffice if only
two such opinions are cited, one from a Western
thinker and one from a Bengali critic of to day.

Helmut G. Callis, Professor of History at the
University of Utah, who is interested in a com-
prehensive study of History in its fullest aspects,
has been in India till recently as a Fulbright
research scholar. He has written an article in
The American Review for April 1961, entitled,
Rabindranath Tagore, *India's Message to the
Modern World*. The article, which is an appre-
ciation of Tagore based on a deep and intensive
study of his works in English, is worthy of
quotation at length, but we shall content ourselves
with a few sample passage. Professor Callis
begins his article thus :

"Tagore was a giant of the mind ; his stature
stands out at the cross roads of the two ages,
traditional and modern, and of two cultural worlds
East and West, surveying both by virtue of his
eminence as well as his globe-encircling travels.
The favourable circumstances of Tagore's per-
sonal and cultural background enhance rather
than diminish his greatness and to-day, at the
doorstep of the atomic age, both East and West
still have much to learn from him."

Then, after giving a short account of
Tagore's intellectual legacy from his father
Devendranath Tagore, he goes on to say :—

"Although Rabindranath Tagore was an ori-
ginal thinker, as a poet of life and love he was an
intellectual descendant of the tenderly sensitive
Vaishnava poets,* who in the fifteenth and six-
teenth centuries gave Indian literature philoso-
phical depth as well as subtle colour. Back of it
all stood, then as now, the monumental wisdom of
the ancient originators of the *Upanishads*, those
philosophical religious meditations appended as
commentaries to the sacred text of the *Vedas*
(Books of Wisdom) probably towards the seventh
century B.C.

"It is the philosophy of the *Upanishads*
which is reflected in Tagore's religious poems and
profound meditative essays such as those collec-
ted under the title of *Sadhana* (Worship in
Meditation)."

Professor Callis proceeds to analyse the in-
tellectual elements in Tagore's concept of human
ideals and closes it with a paragraph ending with
Tagore's poem, "Where the mind is without Fear"

The Bengali writer is Shri Bishnupada
Bhattacharya whose critical commentaries show
a close acquaintance with our Sanskrit heritage
of sacred and secular texts. Writing in the
Bengali poetry monthly *Dhyanjali* for Asarh
1368 B. S. (June-July 1961) on Rabindranath's
World-Realization Shri Bhattacharya comes to
the same conclusion about the fountain-head of
Rabindranath's inspiration. Shri Bhattacharya's
appraisal being based on a far more extensive
survey of Rabindranath's works, through his
ability to study them in their original Bengali
form and through his far more prolonged and

*No less a thinker than the late Bipin Chandra Pal
came to the same conclusion thirty years ago, *cf. The
Golden Book of Tagore*.

our acquaintance with the life's work of Rabindranath at home, the identical conclusions as to how clear and unmistakable are the currents of thoughts, ancient and Eastern in origin, that influenced and deeply tinted the life and works of Rabindranath. Shri Bishnupada Bhattacharya starts his article with the following passage* :—

“উপনিষদেৰ ভাবদ্বাৰা ৰবীন্দ্ৰনাথৰ জীবনেৰ প্ৰতি গৰে
নেতাবে প্ৰবাহিত ছিল যে তাৰ প্ৰত্যেক চিন্তা ও কৰ্ম
ই উপনিষদ অধ্যাত্মবোধ দ্বাৰা উদ্ভূত ছিল বলিলে অতুক্তি
কেনা? ৰবীন্দ্ৰনাথ তাৰ কাব্যে সংগীতে প্ৰবন্ধে ভাষণে
সকলিছ লিখি গৈছেন বা বলি গৈছেন, সে সকলি উপনিষদেৰ
অভিৰূপেৰ দ্বাৰা অনুপ্ৰাণিত।”

This passage may be translated thus :—

“Every plane of Rabindranath's life was so permeated with the currents of thought flowing from the *Upanishads* that it would be no exaggeration to state that every thought and every deed of his were inspired by that form of deep communion with one's inner-being, as was enjoined by the *Upanishads*. Whatever Rabindranath has written or spoken, in his poetry, music, essays or speeches, has been activated by the main ideals of the *Upanishads*.”

Shri Bhattacharya has demonstrated the continuity and community of thought, from the sages of the Upanishadic sages to the Post-Modern philosopher of our days, by quotations from Rabindranath's poems and citations from our sacred texts, and has thus ably substantiated his statement about Rabindranath's life and soul being attuned with the vibrant exhortations of the ancients.

Indeed the same conclusions are reached by those of those that have the mental calibre and depth of scholastic attainment requisite for an accurate appraisal of Rabindranath's life, works and teaching. The crude and deliberate attempts at the denigration of the life and works of Rabindranath Tagore by a small coterie of self-appointed critics from amongst his own people can only be regarded therefore as being either an extension of the neo-Marxian doctrine that no outstanding reputation shall be allowed to stand that

threatens to overshadow the Marx-Lenin thesis, or as the working of mediocre intellects that are accustomed to evaluate every literary production along their own limited criteria for excellence—which, in the case of the most publicized of these critics, are the exhibition and exuberance of the sexual urge and the depiction of the murkier elements in the life of the “proletariat.”

Enough has been said, I believe to prove that it needs a *Mainak* to sound the profundities of this sea of literary production. Now what about the man himself? Here again comes the same question on a different aspect. How can any ordinary mortal take the measure of a veritable Titan, standing “at the cross-roads of two ages, traditional and modern, and of two cultural worlds, East and West,” as he did?

My recollections of Rabindranath start from the late 'Nineties of the last century and they continue, with one hiatus of six years from the end of 1913 to the autumn of 1919, till the very last minute of the fateful day that marked his passing away. But still I firmly believe that it would be presumption on my part to try to give a full picture of his personality just as it would be for anyone else who is living to-day. Only an approximation can be attempted on the basis of personal experiences and on the estimate of those few who came closely in contact with him, personally and intellectually.

Mahatma Gandhi's first contact with one whom he was to love and revere as his *Gurudev* in late years came when he received Rs. 1000 - from Rabindranath as a tangible support for the cause of the Indians at Natal—for whom Gandhiji was then conducting a passive resistance movement. Rabindranath had read Bengali translations of excerpts taken from Gandhiji's paper, *Indian Opinion*, as given in the *Pravasi*. Being much impressed by what he read, he wrote to my father, who was editor of the *Pravasi*, saying that it was a noble cause and that he would like to send Rs. 1000 - to the worthy leader as a token of his support. My father forwarded Rs. 1000 - to Gandhiji, whom he had come to know through correspondence and through the

medium of the *Indian Opinion*, which Gandhiji acknowledged directly to Rabindranath. Thus started the contact between the two great souls, who later knew each other closely and intimately for nearly four decades.

Gandhiji, who was one of the sponsors of the aforementioned *Golden Book of Tagore* paid his tribute to his Gurudeva in the following few words, which express with far greater clarity than a lengthy paean the closeness of the bonds that held the two great souls together :—

"In common with thousands of his country men I owe much to one who by his poetic genius and singular purity of life has raised India in the estimation of the world. But I owe also more. Did he not harbour in Santiniketan the inmates of my *Ashram* who had preceded me from South Africa ? The other ties and memories are too sacred to bear mention in a public tribute."

It will suffice to say that Mahatma Gandhi's tribute is in full accord with the opinion and sentiments of all who were capable of appreciating truth and purity as cardinal virtues, amongst the thousands of his fellowmen who came in contact with him.

I have already referred to the passage in the chapter entitled "*The Teacher*" of his *Religion of Man*, wherein he says that his family was regulated along an "unconventional code of life" which was "a confluence of three cultures. The Hindu, Mohammedan and British" and he further brings in the way how that was modified by Victorian manners. I would venture to say, with all due humility, that Rabindranath's personality evinced the lasting impress of all those variants to the end of his days, and the superficially apparent complexity of his nature was in reality a resultant of these three influences acting from different angles and with variable forces.

He was a Hindu with his deep introspection and communion with the inner-self that governed all his mature thoughts and actions as has been amply demonstrated by his life's work. His truly impeccable and courtly manners, his insistence on proper observance of formal behaviour, within the family circle and in public, the dignity that marked his outward appearance and movements in public and over all, the singu-

lar calm which gave his visage a look of complete detachment either in moments of extreme stress or on joyful occasions, all these were the outward manifestations of the Mughal Code of life that he absorbed during his early family days. In Iran, many persons, including Aga Fouroughi the Foreign Minister at the Court of Reza Shah, repeatedly remarked that Dr. Tagore very strongly resembled—not only in outward dress and appearance but also in behaviour and reactions in public—the old Persian nobles and divines of the Sufi School. Indeed the happiest look on Rabindranath's face that I saw while in Iran, was when he was seated by the graveside of Ilafiz.

The abhorrence of all references to sexual urges, and other milder forms of prudery observable in his later literary productions are reminiscent of the early Victorian influences in his life. He did affect British dress and social customs for a time, after his sojourn in England in his early youth, but he discarded the dress and shed most of the acquired tastes of the England-returned of those days, with the coming of maturity. But he retained to the end the realistic outlook on current events and problems of the day that characterised the British attitude that he adopted early in life. This was in sharp contrast to his deeper concept of Life, Humanity and Time, which embraced all these as being inseparable from the Eternal, ageless and unbroken in life or death. I remember the day in London, about the end of August 1913, when after learning that Yeats had received news from reliable sources about Rabindranath being awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, we rushed to pay our respects and to felicitate the Poet. We were amazed to find him completely unmoved and detached. Indeed he firmly refused either to talk on that matter or to grant interviews to the newspapermen who had congregated in search of copy. A few months later, after he had returned to India, we were equally astonished to read in the Indian papers that were sent to us, about the cold and brusque reception that a host of his friends and admirers met, when a trainload of them had rushed to Santiniketan to congratulate him after the Nobel Prize announcement had been made public.

Long years after I understood why he seemed so inscrutably calm on that day in London, and

why he reacted in that strange fashion when his admirers went in a body to Santiniketan to celebrate the honour awarded to him.

His inner-self had protested and so he had withdrawn within himself to debate whether this fame and reward was of the essence. And it was evident that he had accepted the dictum of the inner voice that it was not of the essence: “*Eha Bahya*” was the pronouncement of the inner-self “it is of the (transient) external sub-

stance,” and that pronouncement was reflected in the sombre tune and words of the Song he composed on the occasion of the public announcement about the Nobel Prize, which went :—

এ মণিহার আমার নাহি সাজে

পরতে গেলে লাগে এরে ছিঁড়তে গেলে বাড়ে—

“This string of jewels does not become me
It is painful to put on and it hurts to tear it off—”

*The same stream of life that runs through my veins
night and day runs through the world and dances
in rhythmic measures.*

*It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust
of the earth in numberless blades of grass
and breaks into humbly waves of leaves and flowers*

*It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean cradle
of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.*

*I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from life through
of ages dancing in my blood this moment.*

—GITANJALI

*The history of the growth of freedom
is the history of the
perfection of human relationship*

Religion of Man



Tagore's Anti-State Attitude

Dr. SACHIN SEN

THE Constitution of India is committed to the concept of the social service State. Under the Directive Principles of State Policy, the State is asked to secure and protect a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform the institutions of the national life. Under Fundamental Rights there is the specific provision that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. It means that State-made laws, even if they do not conform to the principles of natural justice, will hold the field. The State may regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice.

This concept of the social service State seeking to regulate all secular activities, even when they are associated with religious practices, and to restrict personal liberty by virtue of State-made laws gives enormous, unbridled powers to Government. And this is the anti-thesis of Tagore's political philosophy. His major political thesis consists in his anti-State attitude. According to Tagore, India had no faith in political and commercial aggressiveness, promoted by the concept of Western nationalism. Tagore posed the query : what is the Nation ? He gave the reply : "It is the aspect of a whole people as an organised power". Nationalism backs all strenuous efforts for the achievement of strength and efficiency through an accent on national aggressiveness and exclusiveness. Nationalism which promotes a sense of national exaltation.

Tagore was critical of power philosophy. He wanted that social desires were to be satisfied. India in the march of her history had given importance to social life, limiting the State activities to the minimum. To be best governed is to be least governed by the State. Tagore's

basic stand is that the social service State is not suited to the genius of the people of India.

The State possesses a coercive authority; it is supreme over any individual or group; it commands obedience, and it is competent to exact and enforce obedience to its orders. The supreme coercive power of the State is called its sovereignty. There is the philosophic conception of the State which suggests that the State stands above all narrow interests in society, that it exists to promote the good life, that it uses its coercive power on behalf of the permanent and abiding interests for which men live together. But in sober analysis, the action of the State is biased. The State needs a body of men who operate its supreme coercive authority. This body of men is known as the Government. Thus, Government is the agent of the State. The Government is not sovereign in the sense in which the State is sovereign. The Government may have limited authority; it may be called to account when it oversteps its authority. The distinction between the State and Government is to be noted. Government may make mistakes; it is composed of fallible men. And men have their own tastes, own faiths and they may confuse their private interests with the well-being of society as a whole.

The position is this that every act of the State is a governmental act. The will of the State is in its laws. And the laws are made by Government. Thus, the extension of the authority of the State in every activity of society gives enormous powers to Government. And those who command the coercive instruments of the State do not accept the position that they may be wrong. The purposes of the State are defined by those who are in power, and it is they who judge if the purposes are being fulfilled or not. Thus, three things are to be noted : (1) the State must not have extensive jurisdiction; (2) Government must not have unlimited power; (3)

society must have freedom in restraining the arbitrary ways of Government.

Tagore's anti-State attitude flowed from his political postulates that society was sovereign and that the happiness of individuals could not be dictated unless men and women agreed to work for their own welfare. Tagore's attitude was nursed by his concept of the role of the individual in society. The individual must rule himself. But he cannot have freedom if he remains in the prison-house of his selfish interests. The individual must have a higher purpose. He is not to remain in isolation. He is to live in fellowship with others. He must have a social conscience. He is to regulate his passions in the interests of society. The individual must respect social institutions which seek to strengthen social bonds and to awaken social conscience. Individuals, socially conscious, achieve the abiding interests of the community. The individual must follow not his blind impulse but his social conscience. The individual is not capable of high aims if he remains shut up in his own limited cell. Thus, according to Tagore, social relations give meaning and direction to individuals. Society can thrive when obligations are fulfilled. They are to be enforced by social institutions. When individuals obey social institutions for the fulfilment of social welfare, they are free. Freedom is not throttled when individuals give obedience to the urges of higher living.

The foregoing analysis of Tagore led him to the acceptance of the true end of a rational freedom. In his view, society is in reality sovereign. The tigerish instincts of individuals are to be controlled. But they are to be checked, not by force but by moral pressure. The State loves to use force; society prefers to use pressure.

Alliance is due not to an institution but to the purposes for which the institution stands. Hence, there is a room for rebellion in certain circumstances, according to Tagore. When the State acts as the guardian of moral values, it enforces obediences by its laws and punishes rebellion by force. The task of the awakening of the social conscience is to be left to social institutions and to leaders of society. They will widen the horizon of the common man by per-

suasion, by education, by improvising social institutions and by improving social environments.

Tagore worked for a free society. In free society, there is the principle of self-limitation. It is an adventure for the discovery of the moral purposes of society. Free society asks for the growth of the individual, for the integration of the individual with the interests of society as a whole, for the activating of the moral and creative instincts in man, for the regulation of passions and appetites on desirable social lines. Freedom comes when the sense of responsibility grows. It is not linked with the right of franchise. Specks of tyranny are pronounced when there is moral apathy and the decay of social conscience and the proliferation of bureaucracy.

What are the tests of a free society? Tolerance, consciousness of the individual, the search for harmony and collaboration, social mobility, recognition of the principle of suitability, the race for adjustments, these are the principal tests of a free society, according to Tagore. The individual has his self-love and self interests. He has also higher instincts of sympathy and mutual help. The individual must consult the higher purpose of his existence. He is to live in fellowship with others. Society grows when there is unity and cohesion. It is not enough that differences are recognised. The positive opportunities of expansion and movement should not be denied. If friction is to be avoided, the impulse of co-operation has to be kept active. Tagore stressed the point that social institutions should have two objects, viz., the regulation of passions and appetites for the harmonious development of man, and the promotion of disinterested love for his fellow-creature. When man is not true to his higher nature, he abuses power and freedom. Thus, with Tagore, unfree society, widowed of social instincts, is the greatest hindrance to peace, progress and prosperity. It is not through self-love but through self-realisation that the individual is to achieve the moral purposes of society.

Tagore's anti-State attitude drove him to enunciate the following thesis: (1) A political miracle cannot be built on the quick and of social

slavery ; (2) weaknesses in society become the source of danger in politics ; (3) tyranny is inevitable when man is not socially conscious. According to Tagore, truth is not only manifold, but it is ever moving. True, there are diversities and differences, but "they are fluid with life's flow, they are changing their courses and their shapes and volume". Those who set up boundaries to avoid collisions are moving in the wrong direction. And those who seek to obliterate differences for the sake of uniformity are equally on the wrong path. Tagore intensely believed in "the wrold-game of infinite permutations and combinations".

Tagore told us that man lived in a cage when his mind was not free and awakened and that social institutions were blind and unhelpful when life was denied movement and expansion. In short Tagore was scornful of puppet-men. He worked for "live men". And the Tagore thesis is that "live men cannot play the puppet for long". We should be ignoring man's nature if we try to make him a puppet. India failed in the march of history when she wanted to make man a puppet. The other countries would fail too. The State often wants to devour the individual and to make him a puppet.

The other major thesis that Tagore ardently preached was that brute force would end in the brutalisation of man's nature. He wanted us to fight the great fight in the field of righteousness. In "*Char Adhyay*" (Four Chapters), Tagore let his hero, Atindra, make the following declaration which was typically in tune with the Tagore thesis : "I will confess to you for the first time today : What you call a patriot, that I am not. The patriotism of those who have no faith in that which is above patriotism is like a crocodile's back used as a ferry to cross the river. Meanness, unfaithfulness, mutual mistrust, secret machination, plotting for leadership sooner or later these drag them into the mud at the bottom. That the life of the country can be saved by killing its soul, is the mostrously false doctrine that nationalists all over the world are bellowing forth stridently. My heart groans to give it effective contradiction."

Advocates of State authority argue that men are to be controlled and regulated. The ultimate objective is to promote social co-operation.

Power is necessary to create conditions for the satisfaction of the desires of others. If it is accepted that men are ruled ultimately by violence, there is a good case for the extension of the ambit of the State. But if men are to be ruled by the wisdom of those who appeal for understanding and co-operation, the sovereignty of society, on which Tagore's anti-State philosophy is based, has to be accepted. Tagore's free society depends on the taming of power and on the activising of moral instincts of man. Hegel's 'Corporative State' justifies the privileges of the holders of power, and it is based on an undemocratic ethic. Love of power has to be bound up with some end other than power. The real search is for social co-operation, not for the capture of the State power. The State authority gives power, but it kills man's soul. Bertrand Russel gives support to Tagore's anti-State attitude when he says : "If social life is to satisfy social desires, it must be based upon some philosophy not derived from the love of power". The governmental mentality has to go if social co-operation is to be achieved. Tagore's plea for anti-State attitude may appear galling to the idolators of the State. But it gives a sense of the value of thing other than domination.

Tagore's anti-State attitude derives sustenance from the two schools of thought, the Marxian school and the Idealist school. There is the Marxian school that the State which liquidates the relics of the class-system will necessarily wither away. If the State is essentially class-dictatorship, there is no room for a State, in the Marxian sense, in any society which is completely classless. Perhaps the "Proletariat State" will not abolish classes altogether, and a completely classless society will not emerge. And in the absence of the completely classless society, the State will not wither away. And society will be free when class-movements and class struggles will not exist. According to Marx, classes are the ultimate realities of the historical process, but in a classless society, individual men and women will get back their lost position. Tagore's emphasis is on individual men and women who have to strive for harmony and cohesion through social institutions and not through the coercive powers of the State machinery.

In the non-Communist world, political philo-

philosophers are slowly realising that the concept of the nation-State is interfering with the total well-being of the "civitas maxima". It was Tagore who had never been weary of stressing the fundamental truth that people must think internationally or perish. The conception of a "civitas maxima" is no longer an idle dream. Western political philosophers, belonging to the pragmatic school, are thinking of the world-community, the "civitas maxima". They are realising that there is an egoism in the nation-State which bodes ill for mankind. They are thinking of "non-sovereign statehood". Many of the political philosophers are arguing that "the abrogation of national sovereignty is the condition upon which alone peace is safe in a world of democratic States". Thus, Tagore's anti-State attitude is in tune with the modern political thinking. Students of political science are aware that there is an end to all justice and freedom in society if the claims of the State are a priori superior to all other claims. In other words, the power to call the State to account is essential to freedom. And if the State is sovereign, social institutions are thrown in the background. The supreme coercive power belongs to the State. The transformation of the nation into the sovereign State has not been helpful to the growth of free society. We need conditions and institutions in which the nation-State is no longer sovereign.

Tagore recognised the infinite variety of human personality ; he argued the need to give it the most diverse means of expression. Men live differently ; so they think differently. If the State is sovereign and is taken to be the supreme coercive authority, competent and egged on to interfere in every social activity, the struggle for the capture of State-power becomes more intense. Today, there is a struggle for power between nation-States, and there is a struggle for power within them. The diverse means of expression become ossified when the State wants to devour the individual and social institutions. Tagore could not be happy if the variety of human personality is smothered. Hence, his major articulate premise was the anti-State attitude. If it is argued that "a world of competing nation-States, each of which is a law unto itself, produces a civilisation incapable of survival", the conclusion is irresistible that the all-devouring State cannot

but create and produce tensions, subversive of, and hostile to, social harmony and cohesion. The national spirit, promoted by nation-State has an "imperialism" of its own. And when the regulatory powers of the State are extended beyond desirable limits, there is the inevitable erosion of free and conscious society for which Tagore lived and worked.

Tagore's idealist theory is taken to be faulty because man does not improve by persuasion and education also. The theory of the ascendancy of the State is equally faulty, because violence breeds violence and the interests of society cannot be served by making men puppets and dolls of the State. With Hegel, the State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth. And he argued that all the worth of the human being was derived from his immersion in its activities. This is a dangerous theory, built upon the assumption, that the State can do no wrong. With Marx, the State is an organ of class-coercion, and not of the common service of the community. According to him, every State is a class-dictatorship. Marxian conception of history is a theory of class-struggles, and the relics of the class-system can be liquidated by violence only. Lenin developed the concept of the Party State where the Party was sovereign. Hegel found the proletarian classes sovereign ; Marx found the proletarian classes sovereign ; Lenin found the Party sovereign. Tagore found society sovereign. His accent was on class collaboration, not on the forcible ending of class conflicts. He rejected the concept of the all-devouring State ; he found class-conflicts unsuitable for the higher purposes of society ; he found the Party State as an engine of oppression. He proclaimed the need for social harmony, for social consciousness and for social justice through the awakening of the higher instincts of men.

Tagore agreed with Marx that men must make their own history. But are men purely governed by the material conditions of their production ? Tagore stated his case when he stated : "Man must realise the wholeness of his existence, his place in the infinite ; he must know that hard as he may strive he can never create his honey within the cells of his hive, for the perineal supply of his food is outside their wells. He must know that when man shuts himself out from the vita-

Using and purifying touch of the infinite and falls back upon himself for his sustenance and his healing, then he goads himself into madness, tears himself into shreds, and eats his own sub-

tance." This is the basis of Tagore's anti-State attitude, because it is through society and not through the State that man is to realise the wholeness of his existence.

অসংখ্য যখন পৃথিবী দিগন্তে
 পলকপলকে অসংখ্য পৃথিবী কলকল,
 যখন অসংখ্য পৃথিবী পৃথিবী বেরিয়ে এসে --
 অসংখ্য পৃথিবী • বেরিয়ে করল বিনোদ অসংখ্য,
 অসংখ্য পৃথিবী কবি,
 অসংখ্য পৃথিবী কবি পৃথিবী
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অসংখ্য পৃথিবী
 অসংখ্য পৃথিবী

অসংখ্য

*To day when on the Western horizon
 the Sun-set sky is startled with dust-storm*

*When the heart, creeping out of its dark den
 proclaims the death of the day with ghastly heads,
 come - You go to the fatal hour,*

Stand at that vanished woman's door,

ask for her forgiveness

and let that be last great word

*in the midst of the delirium of a
 disordered Comment.*

*Sankarjanan
 17 March, 1937*

—AFRICA

Tagore's Reflexions On Economics

ASHOKE CHATTERJEE



IN his early youth the Poet Rabindranath Tagore began to feel that there was a place for rhythm and balance in everything. Beginning with the smallest particles of matter and going out into the great universe of stars and planets, he found the same rhythm and balance which kept the material world going. In the world of thought, music or shapes and colours, there was again the same unifying force of rhythm and balance which composed a thesis or a basic philosophic principle out of ideas or a symphony and a masterpiece of painting out of various musical notes or from lines and colours. His poetry, his songs, dramas, operas, dance-dramas, stories, novels, essays, philosophical discourses and lastly, his paintings demonstrated in full this fundamental rhythm and balance which he had accepted emotionally as well as intellectually as the two basic dimensions of all creative work of art in the field of literature, music or painting. Rabindranath Tagore was a Prince among Poets, a master of musical composition, a rare genius in aesthetic discrimination and eclectic skill and a profound thinker who could analyse with ease all complex and composite ideas into their essential components and reassemble their basic conception into new and original creative forms.

He started painting when he was nearly seventy years old and collected in his mind the scattered lines, shapes and waves of colour that he found straggling everywhere around him, and by using the same intensely discriminating sense of rhythm, balance, fundamental accord and harmony, painted and drew pictures which astounded the art critics of three continents. His genius enabled him to create shapes where there had been no shapes before, to compose songs and melodies out of the great and complex motifs of the ancient Indian *Ragas* and *Raginis* and to integrate in his wondrous poetical expression the most abstruse meta-physical conceptions of *Dwaitabada*, *Adwaitabada* or *Dvaita-adwaitabada*.

His intellectual vision cut through the illusions of modern civilization like a flaming sword and laid bare in their true form and perspective what were disguised and hidden from our view and understanding ; and that he would know well, critically and down to the basic ingredients the true meaning of all human institutions and endeavour in every field of man's life, should be accepted as natural by all who knew him and everyone who had studied his life and work. I have been asked to say something about his outlook and views in the field of national economics and I shall try to show from his own writings how he reached to the economic forces of modern civilization. I shall also try to draw conclusions of an explanatory kind from the Poet's writings upon various subjects connected with the general development of human relations. In his *Gitanjali* published in 1912 for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature we find a beautiful exposition of the sorrows of having too much. Let us read it

"The child who is decked with Prince's robes and who has jewelled chains round his neck loses all pleasure in his play : his dress hampers him at every step.

"In fear that it may be frayed or stained with dust he keeps himself from the world, and is afraid even to move.

"Mother, it is no gain, thy bondage of finery, if it keep one shut off from the healthful dust of the earth, if it rob one of the right of entrance to the great fair of common human life."

The Poet always condemned over accumulation of material wealth and the piling up the aids to good living so high that no one could reach the objects and make use of them. Even the English who have a materialistic outlook speak of having "too much of a good thing" and the Poet thought that collecting and making huge dumps of things which might have been put to good use if there had been less of them, was a foolish approach to achieve perfection in material civilization. Economics teach us the same thing.

Economic Primers tell the students of this science of utilities that as the quantity of supplies of goods (or services) increase there is a progressive fall in the usefulness of further additions to the total of supplies. Modern civilizations worship the size and number of things. The bigger the size and the larger the number the nearer one comes to perfection ; is one way of looking at things. And the Poet told us it was the wrong way to look at things. The value of things begins to vanish after a certain size or number has been achieved and man becomes a prisoner in the prison that he himself builds in the hope that his constructive efforts will bring him greater freedom and happiness. In *Muktadhara* he portrays the foolishness of some who build and construct and thus cut humanity off from the Good, the Eternal and the Beautiful. As in all things so in building, making, collecting and designing man can be aimless and devoid of any worthy objective and his work can be a source of sorrow and frustration to him and to others rather than of happiness and fulfilment. The Poet thought rightly that the purpose of all construction and setting up of machinery was human good, and, if people built bridges or dams and erected power houses or plant in order to reduce humanity to a state of slavery in which men and women would toil without gaining anything that would enrich their mind and body then such "development" would be meaningless and a great loss to mankind. A few lines from his "*Letters from Russia*" written within thirteen years of the Russian Revolution (1930) would give us some indication of how he thought about the socio-economic problems of humanity.

"I could never have believed it unless I saw it with my own eyes that within ten years they have lifted up hundreds of thousands of persons from the lowest depths of ignorance and ignominy into not mere literacy but into the honour of true Humanity.

"Travel is a great aid to education. In Soviet Russia there are elaborate arrangements for travel for all who wish to see country.

"In 1928 they allotted about 65 crores for education in the Ukrainian, Caucasian, Uzbek and Turcoman Republics.

"The Bashkirs were quite illiterate before the revolution. Their education began in 1922 and in eight years they have got 2,582 schools. There are also two theatres, six museums, 14 urban libraries, 112 reading rooms, 30 cinemas in the cities and 46 in the villages. There are

891 recreation corners in the cities for rural cultivators and numerous dwelling places. Thousands have radios.

"There are arrangements in the big cities for young people to learn industrial work. They come from all parts of the country.

"They feel ashamed that they have put up in six years only 130 hospitals in Turcomanistan which is the most backward place in the U.S.S.R.

"Beginning with October 1930, the new budget year, a number of new scientific institutions and Institutes will be opened in Turcomenia, namely :

1. Turcoman Geological Committee
2. Turcoman Institute of Applied Botany
3. Institute for Study and research of Stock breeding
4. Institute of Hydrology and Geophysics
5. Institute of Economic Research
6. Chemico-Bacteriological Institute and Institute of Social Hygiene.

"In their opinion ordinary people do not exist for the advantage of distinguished persons.....No one can ignore Society in order to improve his own position.

"That effort at improving the fortunes of the country is really living and stable, which is the product of the emotions of the people. Those who wish to be the rulers of the people singly, they always try to paralyse all others by planned ignorance.....To-day we are won over by Mahatmaji's methods of political management, he will not be there to-morrow, and then all who want to be our managers will come up everywhere like the *Gurus* and Incarnations who crop up in response to the demand of those who are mesmerised by religious feelings.

"Where men have not been made ready, but opinion and ideology have been manufactured freely, there I do not trust the high and mighty leaders of men.

"The fundamental fact is that accumulation of wealth in individual hands destroys the self respect and joy of life of the people in general. In such a situation an unbridgeable gulf separates limitless greed from unlimited jealousy.

"I wish that our villagers would practice co-operation in the field of production and economic management. The reason being the respect that co-operation shows to public opinion. There is no attempt at chastising the free will of others and it admits the rights of humanity. Humanity cannot be forced to surrender these."

Rabindranath went quite deeply into the economic life of the people and thought constructively about the problems that India had been facing for decades. He admitted that production and employment were essential parts of national life, and, though one could plan both to suit the requirements of humanity, there could be no question of planning a society to-day without modern economic institution. Just as a single individual was capable of producing all his national requirements without foregoing his spiritual,

aesthetic and intellectual endeavour and activities ; so could a nation arrange its material affairs without in any way destroying its finer feelings or philosophical outlook. The real danger lay in the preferences that the managers of the various methods by which they thought they nation harboured within their hearts for the various methods by which they thought they would achieve economic progress. In many cases their inspirations had a foreign texture and pattern which could never be successfully wonder into the nation's life ; for the reason that fundamentally alien thoughts, emotions and urges would be thrown out of the national mind at some stage, due to their incompatibility with the rhythm of life of the men and women constituting the nation. If the men and women reminded in their mental make up creatures of the middle ages, one could never instal in them desires and wishes which grew naturally in the minds of Americans, Germans and the British of the industrial era. The fundamental thing therefore in fully and permanently establishing modern institutions in India is education. By education the people of India would become modern in their outlook and new institutions would then find a favourable environment in which to thrive and grow.

In his analysis of the genius of different peoples for different kinds of achievement (*Kripanata* 1322 B.S.) he said :

"Human ability has a certain surplus over the individual's personal requirements. He can use that surplus to achieve more than what he himself needs. In animals their ability is limited by their individual needs, and, they therefore have no creative effort. Man has his surplus ability which he denotes to building up his civilization.

"When we judge a nation we have to think what that nation has done with its surplus of ability. What have they constructed with it and to what purpose ?

"We see in England that after having fulfilled their own requirements they have spent that surplus to build up a political system which is very special and to keep that system intact and active.

"We in our land have been spending that surplus of ability to build a strong family life as opposed to political life. Our education, beliefs, moral preferences and actions are determined by our family life."

We do everything to strengthen our family life. In other countries family ties dissolve and vanish where they continue to bind us to dis-

tant relations whom we very often do not even know. So when in other lands people do a great deal for society and the nation ; our relations muster strong to separate us from other people and we find we have no ability left after we have provided for our kith and kin. If we are asked to do something for our families, we shall do a great deal ; but society, the community and the nation will always be relegated to a second, third, or a nineteenth place.

Individual enterprise, the urge to do things, the impulse to put one's shoulders to a job, these are the psychological foundation of the national economy. Raw material and some capital is always there ; but if the human element does not come forward no amount of talk or calculation will achieve the economic objective. The idea that those who are starving will always come forward to do all that is required to be done is wrong. For, not all the men are starving and hankering after the low paid jobs which one should get manned according to any plan of work. And starving men will not get the most out of plant and raw materials. The urge to work, therefore, is essential. And Tagore's idea that individuals must feel that urge within themselves before anything will get properly done, is economically sound. A study of the results achieved by the Congress Government during recent years will prove the truth of the above viewpoint. No target in any sphere of work has been hit by State or private employees, and the reason is that nobody feels any work to be his own personal objective, which he must achieve for his own satisfaction. The greatest weakness of all our economic efforts has in trying to get work done by paying a minimum salary and without giving the worker a personal interest in his job.

When *Viswa-Bharati University* was started by Rabindranath his principal objective was to establish human relations on a universal basis by bringing intellectuals of different nations as well as students from far away countries to his University where they could learn to appreciate and respect each other's culture and civilization. I had the good fortune to be selected by the Poet to teach Economics in *Viswa-Bharati* for a few years. It was then that I was struck by his deep insight into the fundamental facts of national

economy. He could visualise all economic enterprise of national dimensions with the same clear sightedness as he could in the case of a single man tilling his field or mending the roof of his hut. The nation, in point of economic effort, was like a complex and gigantic human entity as he saw it work and enjoying the fruits of its labour. Modern automation of work, be they individual workers or the organized man power of nations; lack that personal and human quality; and nobody has any personal or even group emotions to achieve anything. The Poet gave top priority to this personal and human emotion which inspired people to achieve anything. Like an artist expressing his innermost realizations in line and colour or a poet giving shape in chosen words, to what he had seen as a mental image; workers, the Poet thought, should work with emotion and not under duress. Calculations and plans of an impersonal kind produced no such emotion in the human being concerned.

"The truth of matter is, that arguments or reasons or needs can be explained with statistical charts, only to damage our senses and without building anything. Our researches attract the admiration of people who do not follow up that admiration by any deeds.

"There is an English proverb, 'Where there's a will there's a way.' But no one has said, 'Where there's a good reason there's a way.' That our innermost desires would find a way for us, would have been a many way to look at things, before we had no faith in any such outlook. We thought we were free to wish or to desire but it was in the hands of others to find a way—our hands were here only on sign on petitions (Siksha—1313 B.S.). Self reliance and personal emotions and attachments transcend all plans and calculations. Without that personal interest and emotionally alive human contacts all realizations become meaningless by reason of being second hand. Bureaucratic management of national affairs is always bad for the nation's morale. To do this out of love and the urge to achieve something is always better than doing it under orders or on pain of being subjected to a fine. Industrial administrations have found that the workers' unwillingness to co-operate is not always a matter of money gain. The mere fact that the workers are carrying out orders and

not taking any part in giving those orders make them unresponsive to the calls made upon them by those who hire them, order them and pay them. The workers remain emotionally aloof and render their service as stipulated in their terms and conditions of service. And that is seldom enough to make things more at the desired speed and in the best manner. The Russian Stakhanov took his work as a matter of personal honour and was, therefore, emotionally placed in a position to break world records of output. He broke records and people now speak of Stakhanovism when they describe whole-hearted efforts at production. The Poet discovered the secret of human productivity both in point of quality and quantity. The highest quality and the greatest quantity can only be achieved when there is a genuine desire in the worker to achieve the best and the most.

The Poet knew that whoever planned to achieve something in the field of work, individually or in the company of others; had to have the fullest emotional co-operation and support from the worker or workers in order to succeed. Scientific statements relating to methods, technique and operation; analysis of the factors of production; sanctions, allocations of funds bureaucratic press button tactics to set things in motion; would bring success only to the extent that an impersonal and lifeless mechanism can achieve success. It would require the fullest mobilization of human emotions to get things done to the best advantage in every way. This cannot be achieved whether by Chambers of Commerce offering shares and employment or by the Bureaucracy through taxation and planned management of a soulless organization. It is *Pran* the *elan vitale* or vital urge in human beings, which can perform miracles if properly inspired. The Poet had this mission and realization when during the *Swadeshi Movement* of 1906, India swept forward to do things for herself ignoring the British rulers of India. Has the day come again for us to go ahead by ourselves and without the support of the Bureaucracy and the Chambers of Commerce as those in early days of our national struggle for freedom. For we all feel that although we are being deprived of many things and forced to deny ourselves of the good things of life at every step by our



AS EDITOR OF "SADHANA"

সম্পাদক রবীন্দ্রনাথ



TAGORE IN 1925

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ১৯২৫

Bureaucratic Government, we the people have been left out of the "wishing" to do things. It may be proved for the sake of argument and by theoretical analysis that we are the fountain from which flows all inspiration to do things at Government level ; but we know in our heart of hearts that we are being cheated out of something vital, namely, our personal and emotional contact with the planning, the sanctioning and the actual work involved. The public are the owners of the State buildings theoretically, but they require passes signed by the bureaucrats to

enter those buildings. They, therefore, do not feel that they have anything to do with the ownership, occupation or management of those buildings. The same is true of all the railways, roads, canals, power plants and factories owned by the public. The Poet's emphasis upon the vital bonds that should bind the people with the things that "they own, build and operate" is of great significance, and our bureaucrats should make a special study of that part of his philosophy to guide them in national planning.

*Those who Struck Him once
in the name of their rulers
are born again in this present age.*

*They gather in their prayer-halls
in a pious garb
they call their soldiers,
'Kil, Kil', they shout,
in their roaring mangle
the music of their hymns,
while the Son of Man in his
agonies prays
O God, fling far away this cup
Filled with the bitterest of poisons.*

1932

Son of Man

সেদিন তাঁকে মেরেছিল যারা
ধর্ম মন্দিরের ছায়ায় দাঁড়িয়ে
'হাঁরাই আজ নতুন জন্ম নিল দলে দলে,
নারাই আজ ধর্ম মন্দিরের বেদীর সামনে থেকে
পূজামন্দিরের স্তরে ডাকচে বাতক পৈতৃকে,
বলচে — "মারো, মারো।"
মানব-পুত্র যতুণায় বলে উল্লসে উধে চেয়ে,
হে ঈশ্বর, হে মাতৃশবের ঈশ্বর,
কেন আমায় আগ করলে !

প্রবিন ১৩৩৯

— মানব পুত্র
(পুনশ্চ)



Honouring & Dishonouring Tagore

PROF. TARAKNATH SEN

It is unquestionably an extraordinary piece of good fortune for us, Bengalis and Indians, that a great man and writer like Tagore was born among us. I, for one, am not quite sure whether we deserve it fully. Deserved or undeserved, it is undoubtedly one to express our thankfulness for, in public and on a national scale, on this occasion of the centenary of his birth. But the expression would not be worthy of the occasion if it were confined to only ephemeral celebrations. To be commensurate with the greatness of the occasion, ways of expression of substantial and permanent worth must be sought for. I am going to speak here of two such.

One of the very best ways of honouring the memory of Tagore would be, to my mind, to prepare a standard concordance to his works. In English they have had by now standard concordances to the works of nearly all their major poets. Surely we owe it to the memory of our national poet to prepare and bring out a standard concordance to his writings. This will be a work of solid worth and permanent value; a reliable concordance will be to students of Tagore an invaluable reference book and tool of research.

It is by no means an easy task to prepare a full concordance to the immense body of Tagore's writings. It calls for a team of devoted workers and adequate financial provision, and will be necessarily spread over a number of years. But a start might well be made in this centenary year, and would form a worthy part of the centenary celebrations. The compilation of a verbal concordance, covering both his prose and his verse, is what we should attempt in the first instance; that of what is called a 'real' concordance, that is to say, a subjectwise one, may be undertaken later.

The Visva-Bharati University should, to my mind, take the work in hand, and approach the Central and the West Bengal Government for financial assistance in the undertaking. Since both the Governments have sponsored the centenary

celebrations this year, financial assistance towards the compilation of a Tagore Concordance ought to be regarded by them as a necessary part of the obligations they have assumed.

The other way of honouring the memory of Tagore I am going to speak of, was suggested by an episode recorded in Sm. Nirmalkumari Mahalanobis's recently published reminiscences of the last days of Tagore, *Baishche Shraban*. Only a few weeks before his death Tagore was speaking to the people assembled in his room (including the authoress) of the sufferings of Bengal villagers, witnessed with his own eyes, due to scarcity of drinking water; and she found the Poet in tears as he spoke. Let us honour those tears of the Poet, shed on the eve of death over the sufferings of his countrymen. They are sacred tears. They are best honoured if the Government of West Bengal makes it a point to sink one or more tube-wells, as needed, at every village in the State which has none, and to add to their number where the existing ones, if any, are not sufficient to meet local needs. A plaque should be attached to each such tube-well describing the occasion of the installation. It is not yet too late perhaps to insert a scheme like the one suggested in the Third Five-Year Plan of West Bengal. It would bring home to the masses of Tagore's countrymen as nothing else perhaps could how much they were in his thoughts and how he was indeed their 'national poet' in a very real sense of the term. Tagore, it must not be forgotten, was not merely a poet and man of letters but one who worried himself a good deal over the problems of an afflicted country and world and a very large part of whose multifarious activity consisted of social service alone. This centenary year calls for a memorial to the Poet that would emphasize this aspect of his life and work.

Ways of dishonouring the memory of Tagore are many and varied, and it is not the purpose of

this article to catalogue them. I would confine myself here to one rather insidious way of honouring his memory which amounts to dishonouring—I refer to the filming of his works. Film versions have been made within the last few years of two of his best-known short stories—two of his finest—*Kabuliwallah* and *Kshudita Pashan* (*Hungry Stones*). (Films of other short stories are in contemplation or in the making). Both the films add a lot of alien matter to the original stuff—paddings and graftings, frills and embroideries, that tend to give a spectator, who has not read the stories themselves, the impression that Tagore did not know his art. How is it possible—the film-makers might ask—to transform a short story into a feature film without additions? Of course, not. Exactly the reason why film-makers should leave the short stories of Tagore severely alone. The short stories of Tagore, and the two stories, *Kabuliwallah* and *Kshudita Pashan*, in particular, are each a self-contained and self-complete work of art. Their concentrated form, would not brook an addition here or a subtraction there; any the least interference sends its integrity to pieces. That is the sacrilege (aesthetically it is no less than that) that has been perpetrated in the two films. The film of *Kabuliwallah* adds details about the prison-life of Rahamat that would furnish matter enough for another short story. In that of *Kshudita Pashan* the fine poetry of the original is reduced to prose in the way a series of suggestive interrogations are turned into flat affirmations, the supernatural,

realized as a feeling in the original, is brought down to an ocular level, and a hint of re-incarnation thrown in for additional embellishment. The two films have undoubtedly their merits as films. But even on the most liberal appraisal of their film virtues, the question still remains: 'Why create one work of art by killing another?'

Literary classics are often mutilated beyond recognition in western films. But then, fortunately, the majority of picture-goers in western countries are acquainted with the originals of such films: which is not the case with the two films in question, so far as non-Bengali audiences are concerned. The two films have been widely exhibited outside West Bengal. Of the non-Bengali film-goers who have viewed or will be viewing the two films, only a negligible minority have or will have read the two stories of Tagore either in the original or in their English translations. The non-Bengali film-goer, therefore, could hardly be blamed if from his experience of the two films he concluded that Tagore was a writer who used to pad his short stories with crude and meretricious otiosities. Would that be a service to the memory of Tagore? The least that film-makers could do if they cared for the memory of Tagore would be to preface such films with a candid declaration that, while some of their matter was taken from this or that work of Tagore's, there was a good deal in them that was simply not Tagore's.

I sit at my window this morning, where the World like a passer-by

stops for a moment, notes to me and goes.

T A G O R E



Rabindranath and Art

ARUN SEN.

IN 1910, the rising time of the Bengal School had inundated the country. Intellectuals greeted this school with hopes in their hearts, and dreams of a revival of the priestine glories of the past. Our knowledge of art in those days was meagre and pathetic in its poverty. It was derived from the staid volumes created by British clericals, who vomited their derivative erudition in these volumes. They discoursed patiently on Hellenism, Asia Minor, elegance and beauty—interlaid with cheap prints of Greek and lover of Roman art. On worse, we regaled ourselves on the vapid outpourings of Victorian age—distant archeologists, who vented their imperialistic spleen on Indian gods, and goddesses. In a word, we had not the faintest motion of the past, of the revival of which we dreamed. We were pessimistic of a virulent type.

In 1910, Dr. Coomaraswamy's exhibition of Indian paintings was a bombshell fluency on the serene atmosphere of our *passive* world. For the first time, we realised the significance of Rajasthani and Pahari painting. The vision unfolded itself gradually as the result of continuous labour and study. But this did not scatter our dreams of the revival. The comprehension of the wide gulf between mediaeval India and modern Bengal was a slow process, uncomfortable ideas of the inadequacy of techniques began to on our hopes. But we persisted, and penetrated further into the past. We passed on to a steady on ancient India—and careful study of Ajanta, Bagh, Sigrinja presented an utterly novel world. We had a glimmering of the idea that a revival of the past would not be a facile process, and arduous labour would be necessary. The discomfort of doubt obtruded on our hopes—our dreams were clouded.

Into this atmosphere of doubt, Rabindranath penetrated—at first as a disfigure in the background. In 1914 I had prolonged conversations with him in that memorable octagonal room. His

raticinations were (as always) tinged with Sarcars. He pointed out that the Raiasthanis and Paharis lived in a different world—in which feudalism ruled with its securities, its balances, its exploitations in which an infacet agriculture was welded with pastoralidylls. Thereby a culture was created, which was entirely alien to us in modern Bengal. We were living on the threshold of the Industrial Revolution, and the mad rush of progress meant a holocaust of all that the past stood for. It is that with which we would have to come to terms and not with the distant memories of past. He reminded me of the cruel fate of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of the duly entombment of Rosette and Millais and with cruel laughter reminded us of the gloom and darkness into which the Pre-Raphaelite had plunged us. What is a trueism now as a revelation then.

Thereafter I had occasional discourses with him. He was anxious to pay into one chaning thoughts and ideas. To my questions regarding the courses which art too take in Bengal—he used to reply with an enigmatic—Wait and see. But his noble rebellion burst on us with dramatic suddenness. He had gone to France, the fountain-head of inspiration where was a living tradition, where inspired and a whole troupe of heroes struggled, starved and created. Rabindra naturally began to paint according to the truest of a living tradition. His multi-ideas burst forth in line and colour, and his creations were imfeeted with a new life. They were not suave or elegant, but living. He did not see in colour with a hundred lives but struttled with a thousand thanks. His themes were varied and multi for he was inspired by a vigorous life, not by a moribund tradition.

He threw out a challenge to the aesthetic world and I ask you to judge him as he will be judged in the Bar of History,—as a rebel not as the vanguard of the Rocoses.

Rabindranath

PROF. KSHITISH PROSAD CHATTOPADHYA



I SAW THE POET and heard him speak when I was little over six years of age. The *Swadeshi* movement had started, and my mother had explained to me very simply why I should use only goods made in our country. She had told me that the money paid would go to keep in food the men and women who made those things in our land. My father was in full sympathy with the movement, and when he learnt that "Rabi Babu" as he was then termed, was going to speak at a meeting in our neighbourhood on the *Swadeshi* movement, he took me with him to attend it. I remember only the tall figure and the musical voice but nothing more of the meeting save that he supported "*Buy Swadeshi*". The gist of his talk was explained to me by my father after the meeting. We knew that Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal was aimed at weakening our fighting strength. When we learnt that tying the *rakhi* on the wrist of all as a symbol of our unity in spite of partition, was to be carried out on the thirtieth of Aswin, I followed my older cousin Prafulla Ghoshal (whom I called elder brother as I had none of my own) into the streets on the date tying the *rakhi* thread on the wrist of all passers-by. The Poet had contributed to this symbolic act to the movement, borrowing the idea from the ancient *rakhi bandhan* rite of conferring brotherhood.

Although Rabindranath did not join the militant movement for Independence, nevertheless, in his own way he contributed enormously to it, through songs, poems, speeches and plays. I have already mentioned one of his earlier contributions. Later, during the First World War, when hundreds of young men of Bengal were being interned and mal-treated, the Poet came out with powerful articles and speeches against such action. He still believed at that epoch that the ruling class of Great Britain was amenable to reason; this led him in his famous "*Choto o Baro*" to try to persuade them

to control the "Small Englishmen" here in India from such wrong action. In his speech "*Kartar Ichay Karma*" he lashed out at the unjust police arrests of the period. As a student at College at the time I listened with rapt attention to these speeches and once I felt very proud of the fact that I was serving as a volunteer at the hall door to regulate admission to the lecture.

One sentence has remained in my mind. The Poet said (in Bengali), quoting the illustration (in Sanskrit) of logicians, that fire is presumed when smoke is seen on a hill. But, added the Poet "wherever the fire of patriotism burns, the police infer, there must be the smoke of anarchical violence". Later when the Jalianwallabagh massacre occurred, followed by unheard of deliberate humiliation of the people of Amritsar by the military authorities, it is well-known how the Poet came out not only with a statement, but a gesture that betokened his utter condemnation of British Rule in India. Gandhiji had by then come back to India and Indian politics and he soon came in contact with the Poet, and along with those who worked in *Shantiniketan*, referred to him as *Gurudev*. What the Poet said to Gandhiji and what his attitude to *Charkha* was well-known through his writings. I have no personal knowledge of these matters. But I saw a different side of him during this period. Our family and the *Tagores of Jorasanko* had been united by many ties of marriage. As a young lad I had often been to their house on ceremonial occasions and sometimes attended functions at *Bichitra* to see the Poet participate in his dramas or to hear him recite one of his poems. But I came much nearer to him when, on my return from Cambridge in 1923 I was formally engaged to his grandniece Monjusree the daughter of his favourite nephew Shri Surendranath Tagore, a litterateur in his own right, and well-known as the founder Secretary of Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Society.

Not only *Shantiniketan* but the *Jorasanko* house of Tagores was quite often the scene of preparations for presenting to the public his dramas, operas, and seasonal songs strung together like a garland. At the time I mention, the Poet was getting ready to present at the Empire Theatre his play *Visarjan*. In the course of my frequent and regular visits to Bichitra's house with her parents, I had sometimes met Tagore this time, where my affianced bride was staying and in course of occasional discussion stood up for my point of view. The Poet jokingly referred to me as ready to twirl the sword, and thought that I was a suitable person to act the role of *Senapati Nayan Roy* in *Visarjan*. So I came every evening to see him patiently coach all participants in the play and myself also to get lessons from him. Tagore was to play the role of *Jaysinha* a young man with royal blood who eventually sacrificed himself for the good of the people. The role of the artless young girl *Aparna* who falls in love with him was to have been played by a young girl (Sm. Ranu Adhikari now Lady Ranu Mukherjee) who unfortunately fell ill at the last moment. Her place was taken by my fiancée Monjusree who was also a great favourite of her granduncle. On the day of the play Shri Abanindranath Tagore and Shri Nandalal Bose employed all their art to make Tagore then over sixty, to look as young as possible. Actually, when the two great artists had finished their job, he looked barely forty I remember I gazed in wonder at the change in his appearance, as he came down from his room on the second floor and remarked on his youthful mien. Tagore smiled and said playfully "Alas what is the good of it? However young I may look, I have no chance against you with my granddaughter" (In Bengalee Granddaughter—Grandniece).

Sometimes an elaborate little comedy or play—let would be got up only for the large family gathering in the three houses in *Jorasanko*. A few weeks after the play *Visarjan* had been successfully presented, a comedy was enacted at the *Jorasanko* houses. Shri Gaganendranath Tagore made a few changes in his personal appearance and called on the Poet, ostensibly as a different personage to ask for his blessings for his newly married son and daughter-in-law.

Tagore in his turn pretended to mistake him for some one else and made some remarks at which the visitor took offence, naturally in pretence and went off in a huff. The Poet then learned (pretended) mistake and sent a nice letter of apology, inviting the newly married couple to meet him two days later. There was of course such wedded pair; but their part was played by two grandnieces of Tagore, the role of the bridegroom being allotted to my affianced. Shri Gaganendranath took charge of the make up and made a wonderful job of it, so that when the pair came, none of their relations knew them.

I believe Sm. Ranu Adhikari had said in the course of a talk with Tagore she could not be deceived by playacting and this comedy was a failure for her, which however found her wanting. I had no idea before I called as usual in the evening at *Jorasanko* as to who were personating the bride and groom. My sister-in-law Sm. Sujata daughter of Shri Gaganendranath Tagore had married her cousin Shri S. K. Mukherji. She came to me and asked me to see the masqueraders. Her comment I must confess, put me a little on my guard. I did not expect that I would not know my wife (to be a few month's time) however garbed and made up. She was asking for the impossible. Tagore was to be believed, pleased when he learnt that I had recognised her under the make up. I have left many details, of the comedy enacted, as it has been described in full some years ago, in Bengalee in an article about her granduncle by my wife.

Tagore officiated as the *Acharya* at the marriage and spoke in his own inimitable way at the end of the wedding. Next day he blessed us as we left for our home.

My pre-occupation with my work and with politics—into which I drew my wife, as I have always held that husband and wife should work for a common ideal in life—left very little time for us to go to *Shantiniketan*. The Poet would have liked my wife to participate in the drama and song festivals there, in view of her great musical and histrionic talent. But she had disappointed him to stand by the side of her husband during the troubled times and to look after her family—two young sons and an able mother-in-law. The Poet had too big a heart

resent this and made us welcome whenever either of us could visit him.

Once he came to the residence of Shri Pramatha Chaudhury (*Birbal*), whose house and ours adjoined; there was in fact a common passage to Mayfair Road for both houses. The Poet was sitting in the ground floor verandah facing the lawn next to our houses as we went to him to pay our respects. My wife had my eldest boy, (the second had not come then) a chubby and handsome youngster, in her arms. The Poet lightly caressed his cheeks and asked what name we had given him. She said it was Gautam. The Poet asked "Why Gautam, and not Maitreya"? I said that I felt deep reverence and admiration for Gautama Buddha and so had given his name to my first born. The Poet became abstracted and gently uttered a line of verse. We waited silent, and expectant; a poem was on the way. Alas! there was an interruption. Shri Chaudhury came back, and welcome as he was, the train of thought was broken. The Poet was to go a short distance; but as he was not quite well he did not want to go on foot. Shri Chaudhury had gone to ask his *chauffeur* to take Tagore in his car; but came back to report that something had gone wrong and the car would not be soon ready. I told the Poet that I had a ramshackle vehicle which went all right; if he was agreeable I could take him in it. The Poet laughed and said he did not mind how old the car was so long as I took him safe and sound in limb the short distance that he wanted to go.

We could visit him very rarely at *Shantiniketan*, but went to offer our respects whenever he came to Calcutta. As I have stated earlier, our visits were always welcomed by him even though he might have wished his grandniece to visit him more frequently. Once my wife went with my friend Shri Subhas Chandra Bose to *Shantiniketan* to persuade the Poet, successfully it appeared, to lend his name to an appeal by Subhas. Let it not be misunderstood that the Poet had to be persuaded against his own judgment.

The last time I saw him in *Shantiniketan* was towards the close of his life. His health was failing and on the morning that I called he was not seated at his usual place in the covered verandah. His personal servant told me he had been slightly indisposed the previous evening and was then resting in the inner room. I told him not to disturb the Poet but let him have later the note I scribbled—just conveying my *pranams* and adding that I was going away without performing my obeisances as I did not want to disturb his rest. I had barely gone a hundred yards when the servant came running and said that I was to go back. I found the Poet seated in the verandah; after touching his feet I said "I did not want to spoil your rest; I feel sorry that I have failed." He smiled in his charming way and said "But you do not understand. How can I face my grand-daughter the next time I meet her and she asks me why I did not see her husband?" Then he added, with another smile, "I am much better to-day. But tell Monju that I saw you, rising even from my sick bed".

The next time I saw him, he was burdened with the sorrow of a coming bereavement which touched us as well. His favourite nephew Shri Surendranath Tagore lay dying. The Poet came to his residence (which was opposite our house) and made over the first few bound copies of "*Visra Manaber Laksmilabhi*" to its author. Barely a year later, the Poet himself passed away. As he lay in State in the ornate cot that had been brought for his last journey, the marks on his face and forehead, of age and of the sufferings of illness were smoothed out and one could but gaze in wonder on the noble *visage* with its great beauty and dignity, in repose in his last sleep. When his body on the cot was to be brought down from the first floor on the way out to journey's end, I claimed the privilege, along with Kavindra and Manoj two grandsons of Gaganendranath and with Masoji a former student of *Shantiniketan*, to shoulder the pall and to bring it downstairs and out of his ancestral house.

"I shall be born in India again and again,
With all her poverty, misery, and wretchedness,
I love India best."
—Rabindranath Tagore

Indian Music & Rabindranath

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

Calcutta



MUSIC is an art,—a composition of sweet and soothing tones and tunes, of meters and rhythms, in different forms, in different modes. It has a long history behind it ; it has a tradition, and though it evolved in the shadowy past, it took a definite shape in the Vedic period, and a more systematic and scientific form in the first-second centuries A. D., when *Narada* and *Bharata* formulated the laws and principles of music in the *Naradisiksha* and the *Natyasastra*. Though music underwent many metamorphosis in different ages, yet it preserved its fundamental unity and ideal through all ages.

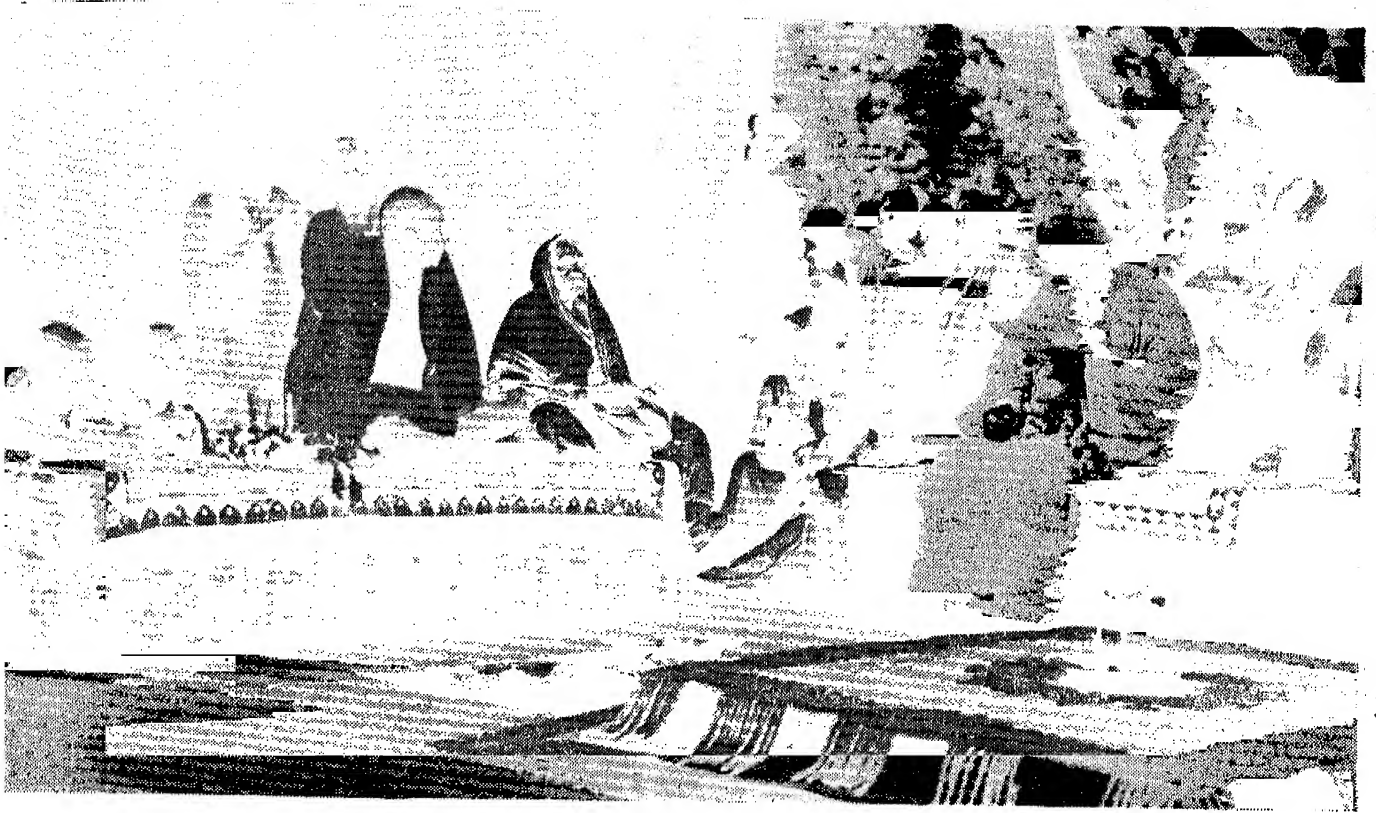
The music, that evolved and nurtured on the soil of India, that maintained throughout the Indian spirit and tradition, is known as "Indian music". Indian music has a special charm, characteristic and feature of its own, and so it differs from music of all other nations. Rabindranath realised this truth, and recognized it as the most exalted of all arts.

He has observed in his **Religion of Man** that music "assumes a tune-form which is definite, but a meaning which is indefinable, and yet which grips our mind with a sense of absolute truth." "Our music," he has observed elsewhere, "transcends the prescient of everyday life, so there is to be found so much of tenderness and inference to worldly joys and sorrows—as if it is ordained to reveal the story of the innermost and inexplicable mystery that surrounds the soul of man and of the universe." While comparing the music of India with that of Europe, he has said : "In India, our best thoughts are engrossed in the devotion to song, and we have to overcome the difficulties mainly in the song ; in Europe devotion to voice is their first concern, and they perform most complicatedly wonderful feats with it. An appreciative audience in India are potent to listen to the beauty of the song alone ; but in Europe they listen to the singing of the song". He has further said : "I hold that the provinces of Western and Eastern music is, as it were, strangely en-

twined with the actualities of life, so it becomes easy to connect the air of a song with multiform experiences of life." Many of the savants of other countries are of the same opinion that Indian music is superior to others for its emotional appeal together with transcendental nature and beauty.

Rabindranath was a staunch follower of Indian music, and yet he had a sympathetic outlook for music of all other nations. He learnt music from his childhood, and the palace of Jorasanko, Calcutta, famous for the culture of classical music. Most of the Muslim and Hindu Ostads of repute from all over India, used to congregate at the Jorasanko Tagore palace at all times of the year. His ear was very keen and trained, his aesthetic sense of music was acute, and his power of perception and appreciation of good and pure music was very sharp. So he mastered many colourful *dhruvapadas* from the famous teachers like Vishnu Chakravarty and Jadu Bhatta of Vishnupur.

But he was a man of independent spirit in every walk of his life, and so he sometimes revolted against the stereotyped or monotonous method of the practice of music. He believed that the new things may rise from the ashes of the old ones, and every epoch of history possesses certain new outlook, novel character and idea of its own. It is true that music of both Vedic and classical times underwent some novel changes during the Mahomedan period, and music that was prevalent in the mediaeval times, is sure to take some new course in the present time. As everything in this world of change is not constant, so the principles and practices of music of every age must be subject to change with some new additions and alterations to suit the taste and temperament of the people of different ages. Rabindranath was a bright example of his own conviction. In the first part of his life, he composed hundreds of

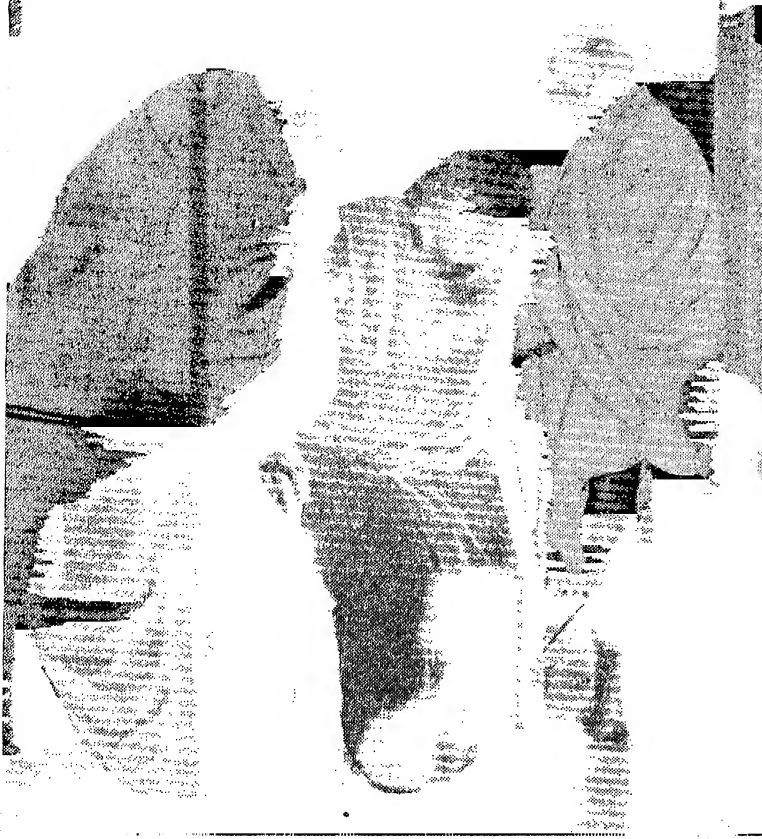


GANDHIJI & KASTURBA WELCOMED BY THE POET
AT SANTINIKETAN

February 1940)

শান্তিনিকেতনে গান্ধীজীর সম্বর্ধনা

(ফেব্রুয়ারী - ১৯৪০)



গান্ধীজী রবীন্দ্রনাথকে
উঠিতে সাহায্য করিতেছেন
(১৯৪০)

Gandhiji helping the Poet to rise
from his seat - 1940



With Dr. Radhakrishnan and Sir Maurice
Gwyer at the Special Convocation of
the Oxford University at Santiniketan—
(August 7, 1940)

শান্তিনিকেতনে অক্সফোর্ড—

ডঃ রাধাকৃষ্ণণ ও শ্রী মরিস গাওয়ার সহ (৭ই আগষ্ট, ১৯৪০)

circles by attacking in the Press and periodicals Tagore's alleged "obscurity" and "immortality"; he (Tagore) ignores the attack; later, at the request of Sailes Majumdar (then Editor, *Bangadarshan*), he gives his opinion on D. L. Roy's criticisms; publishes a play, entitled *Prayaschitta* ('Atonement') in which he inculcates the philosophy of *Satyagraha* in the characterisation of 'Dhananjoy Bairagi'; stages the play at Santiniketan with himself in the leading role; occupies himself at Shelidah mainly with the songs of *Gitanjali*; comes to Calcutta (November, 1909) to receive his son, Rathindranath, returned from America after three years; takes Rathindranath with him on a boat-tour through his North-Bengal *Zemindari*; returns to Calcutta and reads a paper, *Tapoban* ('The Hermitage') at the Overtown Hall; delivers his famous sermon, *Vivabadh* on the anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj (4th Magh, 1316 B.E.); marries his son, Rathindranath three days later, to Pratima Devi, a widowed girl connected with the Tagores and dedicates the novel *Gora* to him (January, 1910); publishes the allegorical play *Raja* (December, 1910); attends and speaks at a Literary Conference at Bhagalpore; the first English translation of one of his short stories (Hungry Stones) by Pannalal Bose (later Judge, Bhawal Case) published in the *Modern Review*, Feb. 1910; on the request of Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, the first English translations of two of his poems by Mr. Loken Palit, L.C.S., are published in the *Modern Review* for May and September, 1911—"The Fruitless Cry" and "The Death of a Star."

FIFTIETH BIRTH-ANNIVERSARY—Fiftieth Birth-Anniversary celebrated at Santiniketan with great solemnity (May 7, 1911); on this occasion is staged the Poet's *Raja* ('The King of the Dark Chamber') with himself in the role of 'Thakurda'; reads to friends and admirers assembled at the time the memoirs of his youth; Ajit Chakraverti reads his essay on Rabindranath, one of the first attempts at an interpretative estimate of the Poet; goes to Shelidah and revises his reminiscences, which appear in the *Prabasi* serially as *Jibansmriti* (translated into English in 1917); also writes *Achalayatan*, a prose-play depicting the tyranny of fossilised orthodoxy eternally hampering progress; the play, when published in the *Prabasi*, provokes violent opposition from traditionalists; returning to Calcutta after the rains, reads a paper on *Dharmar Artha* (Meaning of Religion) at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Hall, in reply to the critics of his *Achalayatan*; reads another paper warmly supporting the proposed Hindu University at a meeting organised by Chaitanya Library at the Ripon College Hall with Ashutosh Chaudhuri in the chair; Ananda Coomarswamy comes on a visit to Santiniketan and in collaboration with Ajit Chakraverti translates into English some poems of Tagore; writes *Dak-Ghar* ('Post-Office'), "a three-act play of poignance and pathos"; various prose writings are published in *Tanavodhini Patrika* (of which he was then Editor), the *Prabasi*, and the *Bharati* in December

composes, at the request of Ashutosh Chaudhuri, for the twenty-sixth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, his famous national song, *Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka*, later song at the annual Maghotsava festival at the Jorasanko-house.

THE COUNTRY'S HOMAGE

1912-1918 At the Town Hall, in Calcutta, on
AGE 51-57 January 28, 1912, a great public meeting is held under the auspices of the *Bagiga Sahitya Parishad* (Academy of Bengali Letters) at which the Poet is presented, on his completing the fiftieth year of his life, with a remarkable address written and read by Ramendra Sundar Trivedi acknowledging in glowing words his great and unique contribution to every department of Bengali literature; the *Parishad* also starts a special fund in his name for the promotion of original research work in Bengali; reads at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Prayer Hall a paper on *Atma-Parichaya* (Self-introduction) in which he maintains that Brahmos are but Hindus and deprecates the separatist conceit which keeps the two communities apart; is vigorously criticised by the *Tatvakannudi* (the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj); delivers a lecture at the Overtown Hall on *Bharatbarsher Itihaser Dhara* (The Main Currents of Indian History) maintaining that the great mission of *Bharatbarsha* was to unite all the conflicting elements gathered in this ancient land and create a rare synthesis to her glory and the benefit of mankind; the Government of East Bengal and Assam issues confidential circulars that the institution of Santiniketan was "altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government's servants"; is mortified as many guardians and parents removing their wards from Santiniketan where at that time arrives Myron H. Phelps, an American lawyer, who publishes a glowing account of the human values of the teaching afforded at this institution; decides to go to Europe to acquaint the world at large with his educational institution and also to study the co-operative system in Denmark; receives at about the same time a request from his friends, Bhai Promotho Lall Sen and Brajendra Nath Seal, then in England to go there and meet some of the leading English intellectuals, suddenly falls ill on the night before his departure (March, 1912) and has to postpone his visit, his luggage going as far as Madras; goes to Shelidah and convalesces there translating into English some of his songs and poems; is advised to undertake a journey to Europe to recoup his health; sails with his son, Rathindranath, and daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi, from Bombay on the 27th May, 1912, on his third visit to Europe; translates more of his poems while on the boat.

EUROPE AND "GITANJALI"—Arrives in London on June 16, 1912; puts up in a hotel from where he gets into touch with William Rothenstein, the celebrated English painter, who had met the Poet at Abanindra Nath

Tagore's house on a visit to India some years ago; receives warm welcome from Rothenstein to whom he shows the English translations of his poems; Rothenstein, deeply impressed, has copies typed and sends them to Yeats, Stopford Brooke and Bradley, all of whom are enthusiastic in their praise of the poems; Rothenstein arranges a reading at his house, where before May Sinclair, Evelyn Underhill, Ernest Rhys, Fox-Strangways, Charles Trevelyan, Ezra Pound, Alice Meynell, Henry Nevinson and others, William Butler Yeats reads the poems, which create a profound impression; here, for first time, the Poet meets Charles Andrews, then a missionary attached to Cambridge Brotherhood and working as a Professor at St. Stephens College, Delhi.

Attends an "At Home" arranged in his honour by the "Union of East & West Club"; on July 19, at the Trocadero Hotel, the authorities of the celebrated English weekly, *The Nation*, give a big party with a view to introducing the Poet to the leading English intellectuals of the day; leaves London to stay amidst pure English rural surroundings and goes to Butterton in Staffordshire as the guest of a son of General Outram of the Sepoy Mutiny fame; returning from Staffordshire goes to another English village, Chalford in Gloucestershire; returning to London, meets Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Stopford Brooke, John Masefield, Lewis Dickinson, Bertrand Russell, John Galsworthy, Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore and others; K. C. Sen translates into English the drama *Raja* ('The King of the Dark Chamber'), while Debabrata Mukherji translates his *Dakghar* ('Post-Office')—both revised by the Poet; in September purchases from Col. N. P. Sinha (Lord Sinha's brother) an old *Nilkuthi* (Indigo-planter's bungalow) with extensive grounds at surul, a village lying three miles from Santiniketan (the present seat of the Rural Reconstruction Centre of Visva-Bharati).

FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA—Sails for America (accompanied by Dr. D. N. Maitra) and reaches New York on October 27, 1912; proceeds to Urbana (Illinois); speaks from Unitarian chapels at several places on Metaphysical topics; on November 1, 1912, the India Society of London publishes a limited edition (750 copies only) of *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings) containing English translations of 103 poems principally from his three Bengali works *Naiivedya*, *Khega* and *Gitanjali* with an introduction by Yeats and a pencil sketch by Rothenstein as frontispiece; the book immediately takes the English literary public by storm and is acknowledged as the greatest literary event of day; leaves Urbana in January 1913 for Chicago where he stays as the guest of Mrs. Vaughn and lectures on "Ideals of Ancient Civilisation of India" at the University; speaks also on "The Problem of Evil" at the Unitarian Hall, Chicago; goes to Rochester to attend the Congress of Races and meets there the great German philosopher Rudolph Eucken, who warmly greets him, having become an ardent admirer on reading "Song Offerings"; reads his famous address on "Race Conflict" at the Congress of Races on

January 30; goes to Boston and addresses a distinguished meeting of intellectuals there; returns to Urbana on March 10, via New York and Chicago, delivers a course of lectures at Harvard University, which are later published as *Sadhana*; MacMillan publishes a popular edition of *Gitanjali* followed by *Gardener* and *Crescent Moon*; the India Society brings out his translation of *Chitrangada* in English as "Chitra".

In India on May 26, at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, Rev. C. P. Andrews reads, at a meeting presided over by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, a paper on the life and poetry of Tagore.—His Excellency in his presidential remarks describing Rabindranath as "The Poet Laureate of Asia"; returns from America to England in June, 1913; repeats his American lectures at the Caxton Hall, London, on Indian religion and philosophy, deploring, *inter alia* the "retrospective and archaeological interest" taken by Western scholars in the great religious scriptures of India; goes to the Dukes Nursing Home for a surgical operation for a malady which Homeopathy had failed to cure; boards the "City of Lahore" on September 4, to return home; shortly before departure learns for the first time about the devastating floods in Bengal (Burdwan) and speaks strongly in protest against the English news agencies failing to send out or English newspapers to record such news of vital importance to India; arrives in Bombay on October 4, 1913 and reaches Calcutta on October 6.

NOBEL PRIZE AND WORLD FAME—On November 13, 1913 comes to India the news that the Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to the Poet for his *Gitanjali* which was acclaimed by the Swedish Academy as the greatest piece of idealistic work in Literature for the year; great rejoicings take place all over the country; a large number of people of all classes go from Calcutta to Santiniketan in a special train, on November 23, to congratulate the Poet, who, however, replies with some asperity accusing most of them who had come having waited to recognise him till the West had acknowledged his poetry in this striking manner; is severely criticised for this "inhospitable reply" but is supported by Bipin Chandra Pal, who, in an article in his *Hindu Review* said; "No man of Rabindranath's position and sensibilities could have been less bitter under similar circumstances" and "The rebuke of his reply was neither undeserved nor undignified". Ramsay MacDonald—then in India as a member of the Public Service Commission—visits Santiniketan and afterwards writes an article on it (*The Daily Chronicle*, January 14, 1914); the honorary degree of D.Lit. is conferred on him the University of Calcutta, on December 26, 1913, at a special convocation held at Government House, Calcutta, in which similar honours were also conferred upon Prof. Paul Vinogradoff, Hermann Jacobi, Sylvain Levi and other savants of Europe who had come to India at the invitation of the University at a formally hands over the Nobel Prize Diploma and Medal to the Poet.

The house at Surul having now been fitted up with

laboratory equipment for scientific research, a formal "housewarming" takes place on the first day of the Bengali Era 1321 (April, 1914) ; Charles Andrews and William Pearson return from South Africa to Santiniketan where they had gone together "to fight", in the words of the Poet, "our cause with Mr. Gandhi and others" ; Kandadal Bose, the famous artist, pays a visit to Santiniketan and is accorded a reception by the Poet ; the drama *Achalayatan*, is staged at Santiniketan, the Poet himself appearing in the leading role with Pearson, who spoke Bengali beautifully writes a foreword to a Bengali book, *Basantaprayan*, written by Sarajubala Das Gupta (daughter of Dr. Brajendranath Sii) in memory of her husband, Basanta Das (a brother of C. R. Das).

"SABUJ-PATRA" AND SANTINIKETAN—Pramatha Chaudhuri ("Birbal"), lawyer and man of letters, starts (May 8, 1914) the *Sabuj-patra* (Green leaves) a Bengali periodical ; the Poet contributes every month poems, essays, stories to this new journal, which emphasises the characteristic Indian values, satirizes conventionality, hollow snobbery and hazy romanticism ; goes to spend the summer at Rangarh Hills in the district of Almorah ; composes poems in obvious distress of mind filled with dark forebodings of an uncertain approach of pillage and destruction ; on return to Santiniketan, receives a foreign visitor, an Arab poet, named Bustance who had translated Tagore's poems into Arabic from the English texts of "Song-Offerings", "Crescent Moon", etc. his poems are now being translated into all the principal European languages—his fame spreading all over the world ; contributes to *Sabuj patra* *Strir patra* (Letter from a Wife), a short in which rings the conflict then gradually awakening Indian womanhood to the tragedy of their position ; it creates a furrore and Bipin Chandra Pal caricatures the story by writing in the *Nayagan* (a paper started by C. R. Das) *Mrinaler patra* (Letter from Mrinal) ; the *Nayagan* criticises Tagore for lacking in realism and indulging in exotic writings which had no root in the soil ; the Poet replies in the *Sabuj-patra* with two essays, *Bastab* and *Lokahita*, deploring, in the latter essay, the tendency on the part of those engaged in social service to patronise the common people while dealing with the problem of poverty and social uplift.

THE WAR BEGINS—On the declaration of the War in Europe, the Poet delivers a remarkable sermon at Santiniketan (August 5, 1914) following it up with an essay, *Ma ma himsi* (Thou Shalt not Hate) ; comes to Calcutta and reads an address of felicitations on the occasion of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi's fiftieth birthday celebration ; returning to Santiniketan, goes to stay in Surul where he composes, in 46 days 108 songs (*Gitali*) and teaches them all to his grand-nephew, Dinendranath Tagore, who was the "custodian and storehouse" of his musical compositions ; also writes some of the poems published in the *Sabuj-patra* and later collected in *Baluka* and two short stories, *Bhai Phonta* and *Sesher Ratri* the

last being later translated by himself and published in English as "Mashi" ; goes on a visit, to Bodh Gaya and Allahabad ; goes up for a few days to Darjeeling returns to Santiniketan but leaves again for Agra and goes to Allahabad ; composes at Allahabad his famous poem "Shah Jahan" (*Baluk*).

FIRST MEETING WITH GANDHIJI The students and staff of the Phoenix School (started by Gandhiji in Transval) come to Santiniketan (in response to the Poet's invitation, previously sent, at the instance of Andrews) influenced by these new arrivals, the students of Santiniketan resolve to help the suffering jute cultivators in East Bengal by giving up using sugar and flour with meals and thus saving money for the purpose ; the Poet, however, disapproves of this and writes : "the best form of self-sacrifice which they could undertake was doing some hard work to earn money" ; delivers in Calcutta February, 13 (1915) a remarkable address at the inauguration of *Bangiya Hitasadhan Mandal* (Bengal Social Service League founded by Dr. D. N. Maitra) ; returns to Santiniketan on the 22nd February, narrowly missing Gandhiji and Mrs. Gandhi, who had come early in February, straight from Bombay after his visit to England, to see the Phoenix School lads but was hastily called away to Poona on Gopal Krishan Gokhale's death ; staying at Surul, writes *Phalguni* and reads the play at Santiniketan on March 4, 1915 ; (later it is published in the *Sabuj-patra*) welcomes Gandhiji to Santiniketan on March 6 ; on the 10th March, at Gandhiji's suggestion, an "experiment" is started in training the boys to be self-supporting without the help of cooks, servants and sweepers ; the play *Phalguni* is staged at Santiniketan with the Poet in the role of the blind 'Baul'.

"PHALGUNI" Receives Lord Carmichael (Governor of Bengal) at Santiniketan on March 20, 1915 ; the Phoenix School students and staff leave for Hardwar with Gandhiji, who comes to take them away on March 31 ; staying again at Surul, composes many new songs and poems ; a cycle of four stories published in the *Sabuj-patra* appears in book form under the title of *Chaturanga* ; now commences writing a novel *Chare-baire*,—which is serially published in the *Sabuj-patra* is the recipient of a Knighthood on the King Emperor's Birthday (3rd June, 1915) ; Andrews and Pearson, go to Fiji Islands to enquire into the grievances of Indian indentured labour ; the Poet proceeds to Kashmir with Rathindranath, Pratima Devi and the poet Satyendranath Dutta ; composes several of his most well-known poems while at Srinagar contributes to the Shakespeare Tercentenary commemoration Volume a remarkable Bengali sonnet, at the request of Shakespeare Society ; returning to Calcutta, reads a paper at a public meeting at the Rammohan Library on *Sikshar bahun* ('Vehicle of Instruction'), urging the adoption of the Bengali as the medium of instruction at the local university ; the *Phalguni* is produced at the Jorasanko house in aid of the famine-stricken people at Bankura, the Poet appearing in the

dual roles of young "Kabisekhar" and the blind, old 'baul' (Jan, 1916); returns to Santiniketan and finishes *Ghare-baire*; *Baluka* published; writes in the *Sabuj-patra* an article entitled *Chhatra-sasan* protesting vehemently against the repression of students after the Oaten episode at the Presidency College, drawing pointed attention to the growing estrangement between Englishmen and Bengalees; his collected poetical works in Bengali are published in ten volumes, by the Indian Press, Allahabad; MacMillan & Co., publish "Fruit Gathering" and "Hungry Stones and Other Storeis".

Proceeds to Japan, on May 3, 1916 with Andrews, Pearson and Mukul Dey; reaches Rangoon on the 6th and is given a rousing reception; leaving on the 10th, arrives at Singapore on the 15th; reaching Hongkong on the 22nd May is informed by the Captain that under orders from authorities the ship has to cut out Shanghai and proceed straight to Japan as the public had grown impatient at the prospect of seeing him; arrives at Kobe on May 29; is entertained first by the Japanese Press Association and then at a great gathering of Japanese intellectuals, when Count Okuma welcomes him with a speech in Japanese and the Poet replies in Bengali; stays for some time at Hakone as the guest of Hara, the celebrated painter, to whom he dedicates "Stray Birds" later published by MacMillan; criticises the Japanese Imperialist policy against the young Republic of China and speaks on June 17, at the Tokyo University on "The Message of India to Japan"; and on "The Spirit of Japan" in July at the Keio Gijiku University; falls immediately into official disfavour; receives and rejects an invitation from Vancouver (Canada) as a gesture against that British Dominion's discriminating treatment of Indians.

INDICTMENT OF NATIONALISM Leaves for America and reaches Seattle (Washington) on September 18, 1916; is met by J. B. Pond of Pond Lyceum, a well-known American lecture bureau, and enters into a contract with him for a lecture tour in the United States; the first public reception in America is given by the ladies of Seattle Sunset Club; at the hall of this Club the Poet also delivers his first public address (arranged by Pond) on September 25, speaking on "The Cult of Nationalism", condemning the greedy Imperialism of Western nations and also vigorously denouncing British rule in India; lectures next at Portland (Oregon) on the 27th, at San Francisco (California) on the 30th, where he pleads for "more of the fundamental idea of brotherhood and less of organisation"; a section of the American Press strongly criticises his speech on Nationalism; is feted by the Japanese of Frisco on October 3, and by the Los Angeles public on October 4; attends a concert by Paderewski and has a long talk with him; reads at the Columbia Theatre, New York, one of his short stories and gives readings from the English translation of *Raja*; Ramchandra, the Sikh leader of the Indian revolutionaries banded under the "Hindus-

than Gadr" party, attacks the Poet in a newspaper article on the alleged ground of 'sailing under false colours by retaining the privilege of a British Knighthood and airing anti-British views'; a rumour spreads of a plot against his life by the Hindusthan Gadi Party, but the Poet refuses to place himself under police protection as he does not believe in the rumour; Ramchandra later denies in the *Portland Telegram*, any intention to kill him; though advised by some friends to cut short his lecture tour, the Poet refuses to change his plans and goes to Santa Barbara where he repeats his lecture on Nationalism; then tours lecturing through Pasadena, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Iowa, Milwaukee, Louisville and Detroit where his lecture on "Nationalism" was characterised in the Press as "sickly saccharine mental poison" (*Detroit Journal*, Nov., 14); at the very exclusive Twentieth Century Club at Cleveland he speaks against America's lust for gold; comes to New York where in an interview with the Press (Nov., 18) he denounces Western Nationalism and speaks strongly against America's anti-Asiatic policy; lectures at the Carnegie Hall in New York at the School of Political Education on "The World of Personality"; speaks next at Boston at Mount Holyoak College on "Art", at Taramount Temple, on "Nationalism" where he receives "one of the warmest welcomes ever accorded to a lecturer in Boston" (*Boston Herald*, Dec., 6, 1916) is welcomed by President Hadley at the Yale University as a "seeker after light and truth"; returns to New York for a farewell speech, on December 12, at the Amsterdam Theatre, which is packed to capacity; goes to Cleveland again to plant a tree in Shakespeare Garden; then to Colorado to see the famous springs and returns again to San Francisco where he writes the foreword to Paul Richard's book, "To The Nations" (published by J. B. Pond); leaves for Japan, on January 21, 1917 and halts enroute at Honolulu for a day; Pearson stays in Japan and the Poet returns to Calcutta with Mukul Dey, on March 17, 1917.

THE "VICHITRA" CLUB -Returning to Calcutta, the Poet has a pleasant surprise in the shape of the *Vichitra* School of Arts and Crafts sponsored and organized in his absence by Ganganendranath Abanindranath and Rathindranath at his Jorasankohouse; finds also another institution the "*Vichitra* Club", which soon becomes the meeting place for Bengal's intellectuals and literary people; in the *Sabuj-patra* writes *Bhasar Katha* strongly supporting Pramatha Chaudhuri in his attempt to popularize the literary tongue and to write the Bengali language in the same way as it is spoken; comes to Calcutta for a gala celebration of his birthday by the *Vichitra* Club; writes short stories (*Tapaswini* and *Palia Number*) for the *Sabuj-patra* protests strongly against the internment of Mrs. Besant for her political activities; in Calcutta, reads, first at Rammohan Library (Aug. 4, 1917) and then at the Alfred Theatre, his famous political paper *Kartar Ichhayaa*

Kerna ('As the Master Will It'), Bhupendranath Basu residing at the latter place; composes, at the request of Pandit Malaviya, his famous national song *Desha, Desha madita kari mandita taba veri*, which is sung for the first time at the meeting at Rammohan Library; reads a paper on *Sangiter mukti* (Redemption of Song); writes a letter to a friend in England (which is published by the Indian Press on September 7) he strongly expresses himself on the ruthless repression then practised by the Government of Bengal against political workers by imprisonment and detention without charge or trial, in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide"; Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal, denies the Poet's charges in a speech at the Bengal Legislative Council; to this the Poet replies later in a statement (Jan. 11, 1918), in which he gives a concrete instance of a young student at Santiniketan, who had run away from the school chagrined at his failure at the annual test, being arrested and detained, without charge or trial, under the all-embracing Indian 'DORA'.

POLITICS AGAIN—A controversy having arisen among Bengal Congressmen as to making Mrs. Besant, then under internment, the President, of the Indian National Congress Session in Calcutta in December, 1917, the Poet warmly supports the cause of Mrs. Besant against the opposition of Surendranath Banerjea and his followers; receives, on September 8, a deputation consisting of Motilal Ghose, C. R. Das, Bipinchandra Pal, B. Chakravarti, Hirendranath Dutta, Fazlul Huq, who offer him the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee of the forthcoming Congress Session; is elected on September 11 as Chairman of the Reception Committee in place of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur, who had been previously elected resigns his Chairmanship in honour of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur when the controversy ends with the acceptance of Mrs. Besant as President by the 'Moderate' Party; attends the Congress meeting on the opening day when he receives a 'great ovation and reads 'India's Prayer' (a poem) immediately after the singing of *Bande Mataram*; *Dak-Ghar* (Post-Office) is staged by the Poet at the Vichitra Club hall, he himself appearing in the role of 'Thakurda', supported by Gaganendranath, Abanindranath, Rathindranath, the performance being witnessed by Gandhiji, Fak Maharaj, Malaviyaji, Mrs. Besant and other prominent Congress leaders; the communal riots in Bihar (Sahabad) provokes from his pen the famous political paper on *Chhoto-o-Boro* ('The Great and the Small') meets in Calcutta at his Jorasanko residence, S. Montague, the Secretary of State, who had come on his "Reform" mission; returns to Santiniketan and receives Sir Michael Sadler and other members of the Calcutta University Commission; writes a devastating satire on the educational policy of the Government of India (*Totakahini*: 'The Parrot's Training'); coming to Calcutta, delivers a lecture on *Chhanda* (rhythm); composes the poems of *Palataka*; his fiftyseventh birthday celebrated at the Vichitra Club.

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On May 9, 1918, Gourlay, then Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal (Lord Ronaldshay), informs Andrews that the Government had received information from San Francisco, that the Poet had been connected with the young Indian revolutionaries undergoing trial there, and that, it was rumoured, he had received German money for his American tour in 1916, when he spoke so strongly against British rule in India; the Poet writes an indignant letter to President Wilson, and although assured of generous reception by the American public (through the American Consul at Calcutta) gives up the idea of foreign tour which he had been contemplating for some time; receives the news of Pearson's arrest and deportation to England, at the instance of the British Government, for alleged anti-British activities in Japan and America; declines an offer of Rs. 50,000 by Tilak for undertaking "a cultural propaganda tour" in Europe and America; on May 16, 1918, his eldest daughter, Bela Devi (Mrs. Sarat Chandra Chakravarti) expires in Calcutta after a protracted illness; returns to Santiniketan on May 28, cancelling at the last minute a trip to Darjeeling and stays there for four months occupying himself mainly with teaching work; leaves in the autumn for a tour in Madras but stops for a few days at Pithapuram with the Maharaja and returns to Calcutta; Ajit Chakravarti dies in Calcutta (Dec. 1918); on the 22nd December, 1918 at Santiniketan the Poet explains his idea about creating an institution which would be a true centre for the different cultures of the East and lays its foundation stone at the site of the present tennis court at Santiniketan; Mac-Millan & Co., publish "Lover's Gift and Crossing", "Mashi and Other Stories".

Out on a tour of South India, the Poet arrives at Bangalore (January 10, 1919) from where he goes to Mysore, Ooty, Coimbatore, Palghat, Salem, Trichnopoly, Seringapattam, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Madras—speaking to large and enthusiastic audiences on "The Message of the Forest", "The folk Religions of India" and "The Centre of Indian Culture"; coming to Madras speaks as Chancellor of the "National University", founded by Mrs. Annie Besant, whose guest he was at Adyar; returns to Calcutta and speaks publicly in this city for the first time in English, to a crowded auditorium at the Empire Theatre, on "Education", reads next at the Bose Institute "The Message of the Forest".

THE GREAT GESTURE On the inauguration by Gandhiji of his Satyagraha movement as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Act, the Poet writes a letter in which he expresses his apprehension of the movement giving rise to forces beyond control; on April 13 takes place the shooting of unarmed citizens of Amritsar at Jalianwallah Bag; follow Martial Law in the Punjab and attendant atrocities; strict censorship prevents news of official outrages reaching other provinces; the poet comes to know of these at the end of May; not receiving support from political leaders in his attempt to

go to the Punjab, he comes to Calcutta (May 27), where he fails to have convened a public meeting of protest over which he offers to preside; on May 30, 1919 he writes the "historic letter" to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, renouncing his Knighthood in order to "give voice to the protest of millions of my countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror"; at this time the Poet is engaged in writing the sketches of *Lipika* (published in 1922); a new Bengali monthly, the *Santiniketan-Patrika* the organ of the Santiniketan Ashram is started under his editorship.

The nucleus of the Visva-Bharati is formed, when on July 3, 1919 Vidya-Bhawan is opened for advanced studies in ancient Indian literatures and later in Tibetan and Chinese with Pandit Vidhushekhar Sastri at its head; published "The Centre of Indian Culture" lectures, composes songs and takes classes at Santiniketan; adapts *Sarodharsu* as *Reensodh*, which is staged at Santiniketan; spends the autumn (Oct-Nov.) at Shillong; returning to Santiniketan, opens a class for dancing under two instructors brought from Manipur; visits Sylhet (December 6, 1919); Lord Ronaldshay visits Santiniketan (Feb. 1920); adapts *Raja* as *Arupraton*; goes to Gujrat, at Gandhiji's invitation, to attend an anniversary function of the Gujrat Literary Society; spends a day at Gandhiji's Sabarnati Ashram; visits Bhavnagar and Limbdi; receives a gift of Rs. 10,000 from the ruler of Limbdi for Santiniketan; goes to Ahmedabad, Bombay, Surat and returns to Calcutta in May, 1920.

Leaves Calcutta for Europe on May 11, 1920 with his son and daughter-in-law; sails from Bombay on May 15; on board the boat has often long talks with the Aga Khan (who, quite frequently, reads out to him from Hafiz and discusses Sufism) the Maharaja of Alwar, the Jam Sahab of Nawanagar (Ranjit Singh); translates during the voyage some of his Santiniketan sermons, which are later published as "Thought Relics"; lands at Plymouth on June 5; is received by Pearson whom he meets after three years; coming to London meets Rothenstein, Hudson (the celebrated author of "Green Mansions"), Fox-Strangways (the author of "The Music of Hindustan"), Cunningham-Graham (the author of "Cartegena"), Nicholas Roerich (the Russian painter who had not yet risen to fame), Bernard Shaw, Prof. Gilbert Murray and others; goes to Oxford (June 19) to speak to the students at a function at which Dr. Robert Bridges, the Poet laureate of England, was to have presided but later excused himself from attending; meets Col. Lawrence (of Arabian fame), who complains to him that the British Government having failed to keep any of the promises he had made to the Arabs he would never be able to face to those people again; from Oxford the Poet goes to Cambridge and meets there, among others, Prof. Anderson, Lowes Dickinson and J. M. Keynes; attends a reception arranged in his honour by the Union of East and West Society, where Dame Sybil Thorndyke, the celebrated English actress, recites a poem composed for the occasion by Laurence Binyon.

A MESSENGER OF PEACE—Calls at the Office on Montagu, the Secretary of State for India; Lord Sinha (Under-Secretary) and discusses with the Punjab affairs, pointing out to Montagu that was not so much the punishment of General Dyer by the House of Lords, the debate in itsness of racial arrogance distress him beyond measure, along with others, a letter to Premier Lloyd George suggesting Montagu as the successor of Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy of India; visits Rammohan Chatterjee at Bristol; meets Sir Horace Plunkett, "A. E." (George Russell); prepares for a trip to Scandinavia but cancels the visit at the last moment; goes to France (August 6, 1920) "with a feeling of relief from 'studied coolness' on the part of many of his English friends and admirers"; stays in Paris as the guest of M. Kahn, known as "the richest man in France"; meets Professors Sylvain Levi and De Bruin; visits the battlefields in Northern France and is much disturbed by scenes of devastation; goes for a few days to Southern France which he likes; prepares his lecture on "Meeting of the East and West"; returns to Comtesse Noailles, the celebrated French poetess, who tells him that she was the Clemenceau when the news of the declaration of the War came and that both turned to read the French translation of his *Gitanjali* ("Song-Offering") to get over the intense feeling of depression which was overpowering them; goes to Holland, being invited there to tour lecturing through the Hague, Leyden, Utrecht is warmly received everywhere; writes to J. B. Pond his intention to visit America and receives a cabled reply that he is unable to organize any lecture for the Poet; popular feeling in America is just then not favourable to him; visits Brussels (where he is received by the Belgian King) and Antwerp, and returns to Paris; is extremely annoyed at the inexplicable failure of his letters from England and India reaching him in time; returns to London; resolves to go to America, "they must listen to the appeal of the East", and so goes with Pearson, arriving in New York on October 28, 1920.

GANDHIJI AND NON-CO-OPERATION—In India Gandhiji comes to Santiniketan, accompanied by Shaul Ali, in September, 1920, on his way back from the Spec Congress meeting in Calcutta; the Santiniketan School decides not to send up boys for the Matriculation examination of Calcutta Colleges who have non-co-operated with the Government and start "village work" at Surul.

Asked about his opinion on Gandhiji's non-co-operation by Press reporters in New York, declares that he believes in the power of the spirit and never in brute force; lectures at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on "The meeting of East and West" (Nov. 1); on "The Mystic Poets of Bengal" at the Bryn Mawr (Philadelph.) Women's College (Nov. 12); watches a game of football at Princeton (Nov. 13), and returns to New York attends the fifteenth anniversary of the

Art Club; lectures at New York (Nov. 20) on "The Poet's Religion"; is, however, frustrated in attempts to raise funds for Visva-Bharati, encountering every step, subtle but no less vigorous hostility, directed by powerful influences on the alleged grounds of being anti-British and pro-German; at a meeting arranged by the Poetry Society of New York he cannot suppress his feelings of disappointment; goes to Chicago (Dec. 1) and stays there for some time as the guest of Dr. Mody with an interval for a short lecture tour in 1920, sails for Europe (March 19, 1921).

Speaks on "The Meeting of East and West" in London (April 8); flies to Paris after three weeks and is again the guest of M. Kahn; meets Romain Rolland on April 7; lectures at Musée Guimet at a meeting arranged by the Société des amis d'Orient; also addresses the Comité National d'Études Sociales et Politiques (founded by Dr. Khan) on "The Public Spirit of India" (April 25); gives as a gift for Visva-Bharati a splendid library from Sridhar Rana, a rich Indian pearl-merchant in Paris.

On April 27, comes to Strasbourg and reads "The Picture of the Forest" at the University; next at Geneva, on April 30, speaks on "Education" at the Rousseau Institute; his 61st birthday is celebrated all over Germany; visits Lucerne and Basle; lectures at the University (May 11); stays with Count Keyserling at Darmstadt; lectures at Hamburg University (May 20) at Copenhagen University (May 23).

Visits Sweden where he is received with great honours; speaks at the ancient University of Upsala and at the Cathedral, the Archbishop of Upsala himself leading a big procession with torches to conduct the Poet to the meeting; speaks at a great banquet given in his honour by the Swedish Academy, Stockholm; is received by the King of Sweden; comes back to Berlin where he meets with Hugo Stinnes and delivers two lectures at the University "scenes of frenzied hero-worship" marking the end of the 19th century; is feted by Walter Rathenau; speaks at Munich University where he meets Thomas Mann; then at the University of Frankfurt on "The Village Mystics of the 19th century"; stays with Grand Duke of Hesse at Darmstadt, where he gives daily talks at 'the School of Wisdom' by Count Keyserling; addresses a great gathering of German labourers and attends an open air festival in his honour; visits Vienna, Prague, speaking at both the places to large and enthusiastic audiences; leaves Paris on July 1; catches the India-bound *Moroca* at Marseilles and arrives in Bombay on July 16, 1921.

"THE CALL OF TRUTH" From Bombay comes straight to Santiniketan in the midst of the Non-co-operation movement at its height; great pressure is put upon him from all sides to join it; against the whole force of the current popular sentiment, he expresses his own views in a paper entitled *Sikshar Milan* ('The Meeting of Masters') reads at a meeting organised by *Jatiga Siksha Parishad* (Council of National Education) at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, on August 15, with Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay in the chair; repeats the lecture at Alfred

Theatre on August 18 with Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray as Chairman; Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the novelist, in a paper entitled *Sikshar Barodh* ('The Conflict of Cultures') essays at a reply; the Poet follows with another paper *Satya Abhiman* ('The Call of Truth') reads at the Calcutta University Institute on August 29 in which he definitely rejects 'Non-co-operation' as 'enunciated by Gandhiji'; the Mahatma replies in *Young India* with his article 'The Great Sentinel'. *Barsha mangal* ('The Rain Festival'), a new and unique type of musical soiree produced at the Jorasanko house on the 2nd and 3rd September - the Poet reciting some of his famous rain-poems, Maharaja Jagadindranath Roy of Natore accompanying on the mridang; on the 4th the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad presents an address of welcome; meets Gandhiji, at the Jorasanko house the 6th September (1921), the meeting taking place behind closed doors and none except Andrews being present; Pearson returns to Santiniketan after five years; L. K. Ebburst comes with an annual gift of Rs. 50,000 from Mrs. Straught (later Mrs. Ebburst) for rural reconstruction work at Smul; on November 10 comes Prof. Sylvain Levi, the first Visiting Professor of Visva Bharati, who organizes advanced research in Tibetan and Chinese studies.

VISVA-BHARATI INAUGURATED On December 22, 1921 Visva-Bharati is formally inaugurated at a meeting presided over by Dr. Brijendranath Seal (*Panch* 8, 1328 B.E.) at which the constitution of Visva Bharati is adopted with Rathindranath Tagore and Prasanta Mahalanobis as Joint Secretaries (Jugma Sachiva); makes over to the Visva Bharati by trust deed the land, buildings, library and his other properties at Santiniketan, the entire amount of the Nobel Prize money and the copyright of his Bengali books.

Writes a drama, *Muktadhara* ('The Waterfall'), and reads it to his friends at his Calcutta residence on the 16th January, 1922; on February 6, is founded *Sriniketan* (Department of Rural Reconstruction of Visva Bharati); prepare to produce *Muktadhara* but gives up the idea on receipt of the news of the arrest of and sentence to six-years' rigorous imprisonment of Gandhiji (March 10); his 62nd birth anniversary quietly observed at Santiniketan; presides on July 8 over the Shelley Centenary meeting in Calcutta; attends the memorial meeting in honour of the Poet Satyendranath Dutta where he reads a most remarkable elegy; *Visva Bharati Sammilani* is started in Calcutta July 1922, addresses the students of the Presidency College on his ideals of Visva Bharati; in August, 1922, at the International Congress of Peace and Freedom held at Lugano, attended by Romain Rolland, Paul Heyse, Georges Duhamel, Prof. Porel, Bertrand Russell and John Haynes Holmes, a "Tagore Evening" is organised by Dr. Kalidas Nag in which these leaders of European thought and others take part; *Saradotsab* is produced in Calcutta, first at Alfred Theatre and then at Madan Theatre (Sept 16 and 17) - the Poet with members of the Santiniketan staff appearing on the stage; on September 19, the Poet goes to Bombay and then to

Poona (with Prof. Levi) where he reads a paper on "Indian Renaissance" detailing his views on the ideals which Indian universities should strive to attain.

From Poona he goes to Mysore, Bangalore, Madras, Coimbatore, Colombo, Trivandrum, Cochin, speaking on "The Vision of Indian History" "The Spirit of Modern Times", "As Eastern University", "The Forest University of India" and "The Growth of My Life's Work" (Sept. 25 to Oct. 22, 1922); comes to Bombay on the 22nd October; goes to Ahmedabad and to the Sabarmati Asram and then returns to Santiniketan after an absence of about three months; Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, visits Santiniketan; writes the poems of *Sisu Bholanath*; his second brother, Satyendranath passes away on 9th January, 1923; the Poet visits Sindh (Karachi and Hyderabad), Feb., March, 1923; *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* started under his editorship in April, 1923; Dr. Tara-porewalla of Calcutta University lays the foundation stone of "Ratankuthi" (the guest-house for foreign visitors to Santiniketan), for which Sir Ratan Tata had donated Rs. 25,000 spends the summer at Shillong and writes there a drama, the *Raktakarabi* (later translated into English as "Red Oleanders") delivers a lecture on Bankimchandra Chatterjee at a meeting of Bhowanipore Literary Society (June 28); discusses, in an interview current political topics with special reference to Hindu-Muslim relations, expressing himself in favour of the idea of Hindus organising themselves but laying emphasis on the economic aspect of the conflict and suggesting that real unity can only be achieved on a fusion of economic interests of the two communities; publishes his considered views on the same subject in a contribution to the July-September issue of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* ("The Way to Unity"); for three days at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta, the drama *Visarjan* ('Sacrifice') is produced (August 25, 27, 28, 1923); the Old Poet himself appearing with astonishing success as young Jayasingha returns to Santiniketan; receives a cable from Italy announcing the death, in a train accident, of Pearson (1924); writes a drama *Rathajatra*, issues an appeal for funds for the establishment of a hospital at Santiniketan in memory of Pearson; tours the States in Western India collecting funds for Visva-Bharati; on the invitation of Calcutta University delivers a series of lectures on Literature, speaking *ex tempore*; presides over the annual conference of the Anti-Malarial Societies of Bengal held at Alfred Theatre in Calcutta (Feb. 1924).

PLAIN-SPEAKING IN JAPAN

Leaves for China from Calcutta on March, 21, 1924, accompanied by L. K. Elmhirst, Kshitimohan Sen, Nanda Lal Bose and Kalidas Nag at the invitation of Liang Chi-Chao, President of the Universities Lecture Association of China; receives great ovations *en route* at Rangoon, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore; arriving at Shanghai on April 12, the Poet explains that the old relation between India and China was "for disinterested" human love and nothing else; and, on April

17, speaking to a Japanese audience, deprecate the Imperialist greed which had got hold of Japan and wishes that Asia should be free from the curse of Western materialism and nationalism; speaks in the same strain also, very strongly, at another meeting organized by the Anglo-American Society; is attacked by English and American papers for these speeches; Chinese students are dissatisfied with his comments against Western ideals which had powerfully captured their imagination; reaches Peking on April 23; the National University at Peking accords him a great reception on April 26; Dr. Hu Hsi, leader of the Chinese youth (now Chinese Ambassador at Washington), meets the poet and is converted into a great admirer of his, which reads on students in enthusiasm for his cultural mission; after giving a few more lectures in China goes to Japan (May 29, 1924); lectures there chiefly on "International Relations", in course of which he tells the Japanese of his "deep love and respect" for them as a people but deplores that "when as a nation you have dealing with other nations you also can be deceptive, cruel and efficient in handling those methods in which the Western nations show such mastery"; meets Rashbehary Bose, the exiled Indian revolutionary, who shows great reverence for the Poet and insists on attending to his personal comforts; returns to India on July, 21, 1924.

The Poet is drawn into the vortex of an agitation over a speech of Lord Lytton made at Dacca praising the police and casting a slur on the women of Bengal; accedes, under pressure from mutual friends, to the request to meet Lord Lytton and help him to explain himself,—Fazlul Huq being very active to bring about the meeting; letters of Lord Lytton and Tagore simultaneously published in Indian papers on August 23 fail to terminate the agitation; returning to Santiniketan writes a letter to Lord Lytton telling him that "a considerable number of my countrymen are ready to challenge your Government to produce trustworthy evidence in support of your statement"; takes part in a tableaux performance of *Arupratna* at Alfred Theatre, (Calcutta).

TO SOUTH AMERICA—Sails for South America, accompanied by Elmhirst, on September 19, 1924, accepting the invitation from Peru to attend the Centenary Celebration of her Independence; falls ill during the voyage; arrived at Buenos Ayres, is warmly received by Argentinians; due to ill health is prevented from going to Peru; rests at a beautiful garden-house at San Isadore as the guest of Madame Victoria ocampo writing the poems of *Parabi*, which he dedicates to her ('Vijaya'); takes leave of the President of the Argentine Republic on December 30, 1924.

1925-1930
AGE 64-69

On January 4, 1925, boards an Italian boat for Europe; arrives at Genoa (Jan. 21); at Milan at a great meeting, presided over by the Duke of Milan, gives a long discourse on Music, receiving a remarkable ovation; sits for a portrait of him by the famous Italian Painter

dhruvapadas in Bengali, after the design of the old classical **dhruvapadas**, but in the later part, he ceased to follow that method entirely, and composed new type of songs with classical (**sastric**) ragas and **talas**. He used to observe that though many classical Hindi songs possess words (**sahitya**), are devoid of literary grace and beauty. He, therefore, made the **sahitya** of his songs rich with poetical charm and value. He also maintained that a harmony between words and tunes can be established to make music really significant. It is true that music, on the whole, is not depended on words, and what words fail to convey, music can do it with perfect ease, and that where words end, music begins, yet words (**sahitya**) are necessary for the easy unfolding of the hidden beauty and treasure of the compositions of the songs. Words are the symbols of the songs, whereas the tunes or melodies are their life. So, according to Rabindranath, the words of the songs must be of deep significance as well as poetical, so as to help the artists and the audience, to easily grasp the divine beauty that underlies the lines of the songs. He, therefore, composed songs which are both melodious and lyrical (**suradharmi** and **kavyadharmi**).

Rabindranath was both a composer and tuner. He composed songs and added tunes to them according to the temperament of the themes and compositions of the songs. He said that a tune is a combination of motions i.e., sweet vibrations of the **prana** or vital energy, which create a divine urge and feeling in the hearts of the artists as well as the listeners, so as to make them transcend the limitations of frail time and space. A tune is, therefore, a moving unit which is creative and living.

Rabindranath was not a blind follower of any chalked out path, but was a lover of progress, and yet he followed a suitable method that was nourished on the soil of Bengal. He was a follower of the Vishnupur School, and it is a fact that this School was also an offshoot of the Seni School (**gharana**) of Delhi, which took some new and novel form in the hands of the talented Bengali Ustads of Vishnupur, Bankura. The **sastric ragas** were undoubtedly prevalent in

Bengal from ancient times, but for some unknown cause, many **ragas** and even **talas** took some different forms than the traditional ones. The **ragas** like **puravi** or **purvi**, **bhairava**, **bhairavi**, **vasanta**, **vihaga**, **ramakeñ**, **panchama**, **lalita**, **vageri**, **sindhu**, etc., and **talas** like **yat**, **aratheka**, **madhyamana**, **teora**, **ekatala**, **dhamara**, took some novel forms and method of presentation.

Rabindranath incorporated in his system the **ragas** that were current in Bengal. He devised also some new **ragas** and **talas**, with the combination of systems of both the South and the North. Sometimes he did not follow the rigid rules of the sharp (**shuddha**) and flat (**komala**) notes in the structures of the **ragas**, and so he incorporated many tunes in a **raga** and made it an organic whole. His method of presentation of the **ragas** as well as the songs was very simple and appealing. His later **dhruvapadas** are not at all the imitative ones, and yet they are very majestic, sweet and significant. His **kheyal**, **tappa** and **thumri** types of songs possess some special qualities. He loved synthesis, so many of the Western and Eastern tunes were coalesced in his system of music, for the formation of new models. He synthesised dance with music in some of his dramas and enriched their rhythm and tempo. He composed the **Valmikipratibha**, **Kalamrigaya**, **Mayar Khela**, **Chitrangada**, **Shyama**, **Chandalika**, which are full of music and dance, having classical **ragas** and **talas**. The plots and characteristics of his dance-dramas (**nritya-natyas**) are designed after the modes and techniques of both the North and the South.

We can discern four or five strata in the evolution of Rabindranath's compositions or songs, and these strata throughout prove the creative genius and dynamic personality of the poet. He had in him an intense progressive outlook, but his notion of progress was supplimented by finality or fulfilment. (1) In the first stratum is found many religious and devotional **dhruvapadas** and old Bengali songs with classical **ragas** and **talas**. Here he mainly followed the past old masters like Tanasen, Baijunath, and others. (2) In the second stratum, though the first initiative was not entirely given up, yet he is found here to follow some new and novel course in music, with the admixture of

different ragas and talas. The words got prominence in the songs and the tunes were set according to the texture and temperament of the compositions. The tempers and tunes of **telena**, **tappa** and other **ragagitis**, together with European and Irish melodies of Thomas Moore were adopted in the compositions of his songs. The **gitinatya Valmikipratibha** was produced and staged at that time (1881). Rabindranath has also recorded in his reminiscences ("Jivansmriti") that the **Valmikipratibha** was born of an admixture of Indian (**desi**) and European (**vilati**) tunes or melodies. Gradually some of the dance-dramas like **Mayar Khela** and **Kalamrigaya** came out from his facile pen, though the last one was later incorporated in the **Valmikipratibha**. Afterwards dramas like **Raja O rani**, **Visarjana**, and lyrics like **Bhanusimher Padavali** came into being with new types of songs, dialogues and dances.

(3) In the third stratum, we find that Rabindranath's musical compositions to be greatly influenced by the emotional mood and religious temperament of Bengal. The tunes then got slight prominence and he also composed many devotional songs at that time. (4) In the fourth stratum, we find him as a master composer of lyrical songs (**kavyadharmi gitis**), the tunes having full accord with the words, and Rabindranath here is found to lay more stress upon the emotional sentiments in his songs. His national songs were composed mostly during the last part of the third or first part of the fourth strata. The **baul**, **bhatiyali**, **jari**, **kirtana** types of songs were composed at this time. The dance-drama **Chitrangada** came into being at this time, and the techniques of dances like **Bharatanatyam**, **Kathakali** of the South, **Kathaka** of Lucknow, and **Manipuri** of Assam were introduced in it. Besides, the techniques and textures of dances mentioned above and the dance recital of the **Chitrangada** also were enriched by an admixture of regional dances like **Seraikhela**, **Raibense**, **Gambhira**,

Gajan, **Kazri**, **Chaiti**, together with the dances¹ prevailing in Java, Bali and other places of the Far East.

In the so-called fifth stratum, we find Rabindranath mainly composing songs of peaceful sentiments (**santarasa**). He was living at that time the life of a mystic or God-intoxicated man. He used to consider himself as a mere child of the Nature, as a result of which got the songs describing the play of the six seasons (**rituranga** or **rituchakra**). Many of these songs are akin to the folk-songs, describing the natural beauty, sublimity and simplicity of villages and peaceful environments of Santiniketan and Silaidaha. He had an intense love for his motherland, specially for Bengal, his land of birth. His **kirtana** and **baul** types of songs are marvels of composition and tune. He had a high estimation of the **padavali-kirtana** of Bengal. He has observed: "Our Kirtan music of Bengal came to its being like a star burning whirlpool or emotion in the heart of a whole people, consciousness was aflame with a sense of reality, that must be adequately acknowledged."

In conclusion, it can be said that Rabindranath was a mighty ocean, in which there mingled all the streams of music. He synthesised all types of music, classical and folk in his system, and roused a new hope and inspiration not only in the hearts of compatriots, but also in those of all people of the world. His music is serene and simple, and it reaches the innermost core of everyone with easy grace. It should not therefore be kept confined within a privileged class to make its scope for expansion rigid, but be placed on a common or universal platform which may be approached by and accessible to all classes of people,—artists and artisans, so as to make them enjoy its enchanting flavour and exquisite beauty, so that it may 'vibrate in the memory' ever and anon.

Have you not heard His Silent Steps ?

He comes; comes, ever comes.

—TAGORE

The Poet as President of All India Civil Liberties Union

SHRI BINOY JIBAN GHOSH



THOSE were the brightest days of glory for Bengal; those were the darkest days of sorrow and suffering for Bengal. From Chittagong on the East to Midnapur on the West a wave of heroism and martyrdom was surging through the land. The revolutionary and patriotic youth of Bengal were marching to the slogan of "Blood for Blood". Bravely did some of them mount the gallows; others fell valiantly fighting ridden by enemy bullets; still others succumbed fatally to brutal assaults in prisons, and police lock-ups, rather than betray their comrades. We are talking of times hardly a generation old; of the thirties of this century.

The focal points in this heroic chapter of Bengal's history were Chittagong, and Midnapur. The memorable Armoury Raid in April, 1930 and its long heroic sequel drew the spotlight of history on Chittagong. The three successful attempts on the lives of three successive British I.C.S. District Magistrates in three consecutive years—1931, 1932, and 1933—blazoned forth the name of Midnapur. It seemed Midnapur had stood up to throw a determined challenge to British rule, and would not allow a British District Magistrate to survive. No wonder these two Bengal towns had to bear the brunt of Britain's brutal might, and imperialist repression broke all limits at Chittagong and Midnapur.

In Midnapur, again, the fury and vengeance of the British authorities, not without reason, seemed to reach a new crescendo of vindictiveness and vendetta against my poor family—a family in the lower middle income group, but a family of lunatics who were obsessed with an incurable passion for throwing out the foreign thralldom. The British rulers pinpointed this family and set about to crush to bits the brood of crazy fanatics, as they dubbed us.

My uncle—Father's younger brother—late Joga Jiban Ghosh—had been sentenced to ten

years transportation in 1909 in the once famous, but now forgotten, Midnapur Bomb Conspiracy Case. On the evening of April 7, 1931 my younger brother Jati Jiban Ghosh and Sri Bimal Das Gupta shot down Mr. James Peddie, I.C.S., the District Magistrate of Midnapur. He was arrested in connexion with the Peddie Murder Case, but was discharged for want of evidence. However, after the murder of the second District Magistrate, Mr. Robert Douglas, I.C.S. in April, 1932, Jati Jiban was put under detention under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Then, came on the 2nd September 1933 the murder of the third British Magistrate of Midnapur, Mr. B. E. J. Burge I.C.S. Maddened with anger and fury the British administration unleashed a terrific tornado of repression on the town and district of Midnapur. We need not go into the details of that here. My fifth younger brother—Nirmal Jiban Ghosh—was arrested on the evening of Mr. Burge's murder, and was ultimately hanged, along with Braja Kishore Chakraborty and Ram Krishna Roy, on the 26th October, 1934 in connection with what is known as the Burge Murder Conspiracy Case.

Then fell other blows thick and fast over my luckless family. To fill to overflowing our cup of tragedies and calamities suddenly, like a bolt from the blue came the news at about midnight on the 23rd September, 1936 that Naba Jiban my fourth younger brother had committed suicide the night before.

I and my old father proceeded to Gopalganj Police Station in the district of Faridpur. Naba Jiban at the time had been interned in the compound of Gopalganj Thana. From what we could gather from local inquiries Naba Jiban seemed to have met his death under mysterious circumstances. Within a week of Naba Jiban's death news was flashed in the papers that another detenu Santosh Kumar Ganguly had also commi-

tted suicide. The press and the public were agitated over these two suicides.

Returning to Calcutta I rushed up to Simla and had this matter agitated in the Central Assembly through an adjournment motion moved by the leader of the Congress Party, late Bhulabhai Desai.

Poet Rabindranath was then the President of the All India Civil Liberties Union. In anguish and resentment my heart naturally turned to him. I addressed a Memorandum to him in which I recounted the whole horrid tale of tragedies of my hapless family. I wrote that not only had my third brother, Jati Jiban been detained since 1932, and my fifth brother, Nirmal Jiban hanged—our house at Midnapur had been raided and smashed up—along with 24 other houses in the town—by the Military at dawn on the 6th September, 1933; I myself had been dismissed from the post of Lecturer, Midnapur College, and externed from the district in November, 1933 “for being deeply involved in the murders of District Magistrates”; my fourth brother, Naba Jiban had been put under detention under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act in February, 1934 immediately after the Special Tribunal at Midnapur sentenced Nirmal Jiban to death; then came this tragic death of Naba Jiban. I complained that the British Government seemed bent on killing off all my brothers one by one; I submitted that thousands of the finest youth of Bengal were rotting in detention for over seven or eight years without any trial or any definite duration set to their incarceration; and finally, I beseeched him as the President of the All India Civil Liberties Union to interpose his powerful personality and influence towards securing the release of the detenus.

My difficulty in this venture was how to make sure that the Memorandum reached the hands of the Poet. As good luck would have it, the late T. C. Goswami was so much impressed and overwhelmed by a perusal of the Memorandum that he readily volunteered to convey to Rabindranath. That was in November, 1936.

On the 22nd November, 1936 the great Poet issued a statement to the press. He referred to the recent cases of alleged suicide by detenus Naba Jiban and Santosh Ganguli, and appealed

for a public and impartial inquiry into the whole question bearing on these two cases, and the policy of detention of which Naba Jiban Ghosh and Santosh Kumar Ganguli were the victims. Rabindranath said that the lives of detenus “have been ruined, their families broken up, and the shadow of unending suffering has lain heavily over the Province, and over India.” The Poet also remarked that the system of detention “crushes the body and kills the spirit.”

A few weeks later, early in 1937 a S.O.S. came to me one morning from Kumar D. L. Khan saying that the Private Secretary of Poet Rabindranath, Shri Anil Kumar Chanda (now a Deputy Minister of the Union Government) wanted to see me immediately. As soon as I reached D. L. Khan's place I was whisked off to Birla House in Ballygunge to talk to late C. F. Andrews who was staying there.

Mr. Andrews told me that Gurudev had been deeply moved and perturbed over my Memorandum. He was often asking how was it that such sufferings and afflictions were being inflicted on a single family. The poet was restless, and felt something must be done immediately to secure the release of the detenus. Gurudev decided that Mr. C. F. Andrews should proceed to England to discuss the matter with the Members of the British Parliament, and those who were friendly to India, and the admirers of the poet there, and try to create an opinion in favour of the release of the detenus of Bengal. Before Mr. Andrews left Santi Niketan Gurudev had told him again and again “you must meet in Calcutta, on your way to England, the eldest brother of Naba Jiban Ghosh, and discuss this question fully with him.” Of course, Gurudev wanted that special emphasis should be put on securing the early release of Subhas (Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose). That is why Mr. Andrews wanted so much to meet me and talk to me.

Mr. Andrews asked me what should be his approach to the problem in England. These men were being detained through long years without any trial. So he would demand that either they should now be put on their trial, or they should be released. That seemed a very fair and just proposal.

I agreed that what he said was the accepted

now with regard to the problem of the detenus. At that late stage—when thousands of detenus had already been behind prison bars for seven or eight years at a stretch—I would like to take a slightly different line of approach. The detenus were clapped into detention merely on suspicion, or on evidence against them which was inadequate for convicting them in a Court of law. Now, suppose each of them had been arrested with a revolver in hand while shooting at, though not killing, an Englishman, they would have been awarded a sentence of maximum seven years for attempt at murder under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code (ignoring an Ordinance issued about two years ago following the Lebonong murder on the life of the Governor, Sir John Dufferin—which made even an attempt on life a capital offence). Most of the detenus had

already completed seven years of duration vile. Therefore, I argued the question of putting them on trial could no longer arise ; our demand should be that the detenus should be released forthwith unconditionally. After listening to me with perfectly calm patience, and remaining silent for a few minutes with eyes closed, Mr. Andrews assured me that he would ponder deeply over what I have said, and if after discussing with a few friends in England he found that my line of approach to the question seemed all right then he would press for it.

C. F. Andrews' parting words to me were :

"We must do something about it. You do not know how very much agitated and grieved Gurudev is over the cruel fate of these unfortunate detenus."

*This is my prayer to thee my Lord Strike Strike at the
root of penny in my heart,
Give me the Strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows,
Give me the Strength to make my love fruitful in Service
Give me the Strength never to drown the poor or
bend my knees before unclean might,
Give me the Strength to rise my mind high above
daily trifles
And give me the Strength to surrender my Strength to
thy will with love.*

GURUDEV



Tagore in Translation

PROF. NIRENDRA NATH RAY

FOR Calcutta, the whole of Bengal, and of undivided India, it is an occasion of undreamt of joy that in all the culturally rich countries of the world arrangements are proceeding for an eager and loving observance of the Birth Centenary of Tagore in some month or other of the year, 1961. Rabindranath was born in Calcutta, the language of Bengal was the principal medium of expression for his myriad-minded genius, his intellectual self respected the highest ideals of life of ancient and modern India, and his message of universal peace spread throughout the globe. In 1911, when he was fifty and in full plenitude of his creative powers he had a vision of India's majestic future that penetrated through the dark gloom of a foreign rule. That vision, as embodied in our national hymn today resounds in all the lands of the world. Fifty years after the composition of the great song it can be claimed that this dream of future India has materialised itself through the magic of his poetic genius—that today the whole of the East and West do meet to offer reverential tribute to the Divine image throned in India.

This world-renown for a Bengali poet who was a citizen of Calcutta was made possible by the interaction of historical events, spread all over the world, which were ultimately focussed in his personal creative genius. A native of the green fields of Bengal, his mental horizon was not bounded by the narrow circle of a Bengali household, his keen gaze yearned like a sky-cleaving bird to distant lands and other seas. His life in its long duration was inspired by a deep sense of human worth. In his religious visions utmost importance is attached to Man as the Divine—a divinity indifferent to human weal and woe could not win his allegiance. His social philosophy is based on the concept of world-man ; a social order favouring individual or national over-lordship—even though it may be the over-lordship of a really deserving nation—was never acceptable to him. He loved his Bengali mother-

land with a passionate zeal, he thought his life blessed because he was born in Bengal. But his Bengal was to him a part of the world mother's universal home. The Visva-bharati, which was the central core of all his thought and action in the later part of his life, has for its motto a very brief but meaningful text যত্র বিশ্ব ভবত্যেকনীড়ং, where the vast and various world is brought into loving intimacy of a microcosmic nest. Every where his emphasis was laid not on the individual, nor on the nation ; but on humanity in its entirety. And this deep sense of human worth is the main foundation of his permanent place in the heights of world-culture.

Through his long life of eighty years Tagore achieved such an amazing variety of artistic productions that they are comparable with credit to Goethe's or Hugo's. But it seems that an inescapable condition of versatility is this that one cannot be equally great in all the spheres of one's own activities. Tagore himself was aware of this limitation. Surveying his past in the eventide of his life he said : "I have looked at myself from many angles, entered into numerous experiments with self, so that every now and then newer aspects have flashed before my eyes. Going over the long and tortuous ways of my life, now that my time of departure is not far-off, I can visualise a completed circle. I can now realise that I have only one claim to recognition, and that is—that I am a Poet." Obviously, the word "Poet" (কবি) here is not to be taken in a narrow restricted sense. Poetry in the sense of the untranslatable aphorism of Sanskrit aesthetics काव्यं रसाञ्जकम् वाक्यम् is evidently intended by him. In truth there is hardly anything expressed by him in words and sentences—be it an ordinary letter or a scribble in an autograph-book, which does not partake of the nature of poetry. The words through which Rabindranath's genius revealed itself are words of the Bengali language. A poet writing in the language of Bengal has become the world poet.

Without an intimate knowledge of this language, it can surely be asserted, an adequate evaluation of scale of Tagore's perfection as a creative artist is an impossibility—an effort foredoomed to failure.

That Tagore's significance as a world-poet was unknown in Bengal before announcement of the Nobel Award is a view unworthy of any respect. There is at least one irrefutable evidence for this. About a year earlier than the world-shaking declaration, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, in 1911, through the initiative and efficiency of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi of hallowed memory, organised the historic homage to the poet, Rabindranath Thakur, on fulfilment of the fiftieth year of his life. In a poem composed in connection with this event, Satyendra Nath Datta triumphantly declared :

In the Assembly of World-poets we're proud
of your seat,
Bengalis are the kings of song-makers, whom
none can beat.

জগৎ-কবি সভায় মোরা তোমার করি গল্প,
বাঙ্গালী আছি গানের রাজা, বাঙ্গালী নহে খল।

It has to be remembered that Satyendranath when he composed this song, though young in age, was already a recognised personality for the width of his culture and knowledge of many languages. His glowing tribute to Rabindranath cannot be regarded as a temporary effusion of fancy. It is a critical appreciation of a sensitive lover of poetry at its best. In spite of all these facts it is undeniable that Tagore's world-fame was made possible through the medium of English translations. This world-recognition of Tagore acted like speedy wine on the then younger generation of Bengali lyrists, one of whom burst out into an exclamation :

My Bengali Muse is the Queen whom all the
Muses greet,
Whose darling Rabi has brought the world
down to her lotus feet.

নিখিলের শির রবি কবি মার চরণে লুটালো আনি,
আমার বঙ্গবাসী সে যে গো নিখিল জ্ঞানের রাণী।

This intoxicated hymning of the Bengali Muse at that time is quite understandable. But we cannot overlook the fact that no poet can be honoured outside his native land without recourse being taken to translation. It was the medium

of English translation that made our homely Bengali Muse honoured and respected in lands far away from our native shore. What was once the exclusive enjoyment of the educated Bengalis now became included in the world store of culture that was open to all lands and peoples.

How deeply Tagore's lyrics in their English embodiment stirred the poetic consciousness of the young Englishmen of the period has recently been brought to our knowledge by a touching incident. Sri Rathindra Nath Tagore is his sensitive and refined book on his father, *On the Edges of Time* (Orient Longmans, 1958) has included in full a letter to the Poet, which, so far as is known to me, was never published earlier. It is a letter written in 1920, when Tagore was in London, by Susan H. Owen,—mother of the now celebrated young English poet Wilfrid Owen.

Shrewsbury,
August 1st, 1920

Dear Sir Rabindranath,

I have been trying to find courage to write to you ever since I heard that you were in London—but the desire to tell you something is finding its way into this letter today. The letter may never reach you, for I do not know how to address it, tho' I feel sure your *name* upon the envelope will be sufficient. It is nearly two years ago, that my dear eldest son went out to the War for the last time and the day he said Goodbye to me—we were looking together across the sun-glorified sea—looking towards France, with breaking hearts—when he, my poet son, said these wonderful words of yours—beginning at 'When I go from hence, let this be my parting word'—and when his pocket book came back to me—I found these words written in his dear writing—with your name beneath. Would it be asking too much of you, to tell me what book I should find the whole poem in?

My precious boy was killed, one week before the awful fight was over—the news came to us on Armistice Day. A small book of my son's War Poems will be published very soon—his heart was torn with sorrow at the suffering he saw "out there" and the *callousness* of the majority at home—the futility of War—he speaks not of his sufferings but any one who loved him can tell from his poems

what he had passed through, to be *able* to write as he did. He was only 25. Wilfrid loved all that was beautiful, his life was beautiful and of great influence for good. Our God knew but when to take him "hence"—and I must not murmur.....Forgive this longer letter than I intended to write when I began—I should like you to read my son's little book, if you do *us* the honour?—(Chatto and Windus are bringing it out in the autumn)—if I may, I should be proud to send you a copy.

With great respect and admiration
from the Mother of Wilfrid Owen.

It needs no pointing out to the Bengali readers that the line of Song referred to in the letter by Owen's mother is—

যদিও অগ্নি এই কথাটি বলে যেন দাঁড়,
যা দেখেছি যা শুনেছি তুলনা তার নাই।

But it is a thousand pities that such a significant and touching letter in our literary history should remain so long unknown. Even today we do not know whether Rabindranath ever received Wilfrid Owen's *War Poems*, as promised by the mother, and what were Tagore's reactions to the tragic end of this ill-fated poet and his few but noble poems that posterity will not willingly let die. But it is a thrill to remember that the vibrant voice of an Indian Poet lent spiritual sustenance to a young English soldier who had learnt to look at life steadily and whole, undeterred by the surrounding destruction of the First World War.

In the world as it is today a poet in any country cannot remain indifferent to the question of getting his works translated into different languages for a wider public. But it is also notorious that translation of poetry is an extremely complex problem of literary discrimination. How far translation of poetry will have to be faithful to the original and how far it can exercise freedom to produce a literary effect—a discussion on this basis in every particular instance is sure to lead to wildly conflicting divergences of opinion. And yet a man of literary taste who is aware of the wealth of poetry in his own tongue can hardly fail to desire that riches confined to his own native tongue should be available to others. At the same time a literary scholar who

cultivates other languages and enjoys other literatures will naturally feel inclined to enrich his mother tongue with treasures borrowed from the achievements of other peoples. Hence it follows that as in other countries, in Bengal also there is the necessity of *organised research* as to the most fruitful method of translating Bengali poetry. It is desirable to get ourselves started on this work before this sacred year is over, for to extend and enliven the tradition of Tagore as a world poet is a holy responsibility that Bengal's intellectual leaders cannot set aside.

In this connection there is a large possibility of self-complacency amongst us with thinking that the Master himself has absolved us of our share of responsibility. It was his own English renderings that were the first step to his world-recognition. Translations into other languages including even some of the languages of India followed from his English versions. His lyrics could not get into so many other languages of the world had not he himself been the author of his English Poems. There is no sense in not acknowledging that English as a language is understood by a vaster number of readers than Bengali can possibly claim to have. It is no less true that the Poet's own masterly craftsmanship in the use of the English words is an undoubted factor in the spread of fame throughout the world. Still this truth is only partial. To push this logic home we have to come to the conclusion that for a non-Bengali to appreciate Tagore capacity to enjoy English is all that is needed, knowledge of Bengali is only a minor matter. This dependence on English translations, even on those made by the Master himself, is not in fitness with the special properties of the language of Bengal nor with the self-respect of the Bengalis as a nation. We cannot help noting with pride the keen interest evinced in Tagore's works in the different parts of India as well as many far distant lands. This centenary year of universal jubilation is a proof positive of Tagore's greatness as a supreme Indian. That this memorable year is not spent in short-lasting effusions, it can be suggested that in different regions of India to set up by Bengalis themselves numerous centres to teach and study Bengali language and literature with special reference to the writings of Tagore can unquestion-

ably claim to be one of our foremost duties. Be it remembered that to teach Bengali to others in their native localities demands that Bengalis themselves should have to learn the languages of those localities. Otherwise teaching of Bengali cannot reach down to the hearts of those peoples.

This proposition can easily lead to a wise-crack—Will the Bengalis then have to learn all the languages of India, if not of the whole world? Our firm answer is—yes—not individually, but in groups. The Bengali intellect is not insular, it is wide open to all the winds that blow from all the corners of the world. Not hostility but eagerness to learn other languages has been a feature of our intellectual life. The names of Rammohan Roy, Rajendralal Mitra, Madhusudan Dutt and Harinath De to mention only a few as linguists, are a part of our proud cultural heritage. It is beyond doubt that these aforesaid personages were men of outstanding genius, and it is needless to say that the idea that every Bengali willing to learn other languages will have to conform to their pattern, does not fall inside the scope of the proposition. Its modest claim is that Bengalis who can undertake to spread Bengali culture outside Bengal as a vocation will have to learn one or two Indian languages, according to choice, in addition to Bengali and perhaps English. It is obvious that such a proposition cannot be looked upon as a short term measure. But it is desirable that a beginning be made in this year of years.

For a poetic translation of poetry in a language of foreign culture is needed intimate contact with and close co-operation between distant languages and cultures. From this point of view a doubt can legitimately assail us, are Tagore's own English translations in truth translations or new creations in a new medium. Moreover, such translation or re-creation was a special privilege for the poet himself. In his absence none else can claim it. Therefore, this method of translating Tagore's poems has been completely exhausted. To translate his poems even into English requires today co-operation between English and Bengali scholars. There are examples of such co-operations taking place during the life-time of the poet himself. In his well-known anthology of English poetry—*The Spirit of Man*—by Robert Bridges, a few lyrics

from the English *Gitanjali* were included. In connection with them Bridges made the following comment: These are his (Tagore's) own prose translations into English of his original Bengali poems. I have to thank him and his English publisher for allowing me to quote from this book and in the particular instance of this very beautiful poem, for the author's friendliness in permitting me to shift a few words for the sake of what I considered more effective rhythm or grammar.

The particular poem referred to by Bridges is the poem No. 67 of the English *Gitanjali*, corresponding to the Bengali original..... একাকী
ভূমিই আকাশ ভূমিই নীতি .The shifts Bridges made in Tagore's translation which were not objected to by the poet himself can be seen if we read the two versions one after the other.

Rabindranath's translation :

"Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. O thou beautiful, there in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colours and sounds and odours.

"There comes the morning with the golden basket in his right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth.

"And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.

"But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor colour, and never, never a word."

There is an altered version of Bridges :

"Thou art the sky and thou art also the nest. O thou beautiful! how in the nest thy love embraceth the soul with sweet sounds and colour of the earth.

"And there cometh Evening, o'er lonely meadows deserted of the herds, by trackless ways, carrying in her golden pitcher cool draughts of peace from the ocean-calms of the West.

"But there where thine infinite sky spreadeth for the soul to take her flight, a stainless white radiance reigneth; wherein is neither day nor night, nor form nor colour, nor even any word."

An event of larger significance in the field of

Tagore's poems in translation during the life-time of the poet is the publication in 1923 of the complete translation in French of Rabindranath's magnificent collection of lyrics—*Balaka*—*The Swan*. This translation, which in French is entitled '*Cygne*' is the result of the friendly co-operation of Dr. Kalidas Nag and Pierre Jean Jouve. Dr. Nag is a literary scholar steeped in the works of Tagore, enjoying the privilege of close proximity to the poet. He became well-read in French while working in the Paris University for his historical researches. P. J. Jouve enjoyed the reputation of being an established poet and belonged to the enlightened and progressive group of French Scholars gathering round the arresting personality of Romain Rolland. Dr. Nag used to recite to Jouve the Bengali original of *Balaka*'s lyrics, in addition to translating and elucidating their literary content. Jouve used to choose words and phrases, following the rhythm-pattern and verse-structure as recited by Dr. Nag. Jouve himself not knowing Bengali, perhaps this translation cannot claim to have been made straight from the original. Yet, in the conditions then prevailing, the significance of this international co-operation cannot be over-estimated.

International co-operation in the field of intellectual activities was one of most intimate dreams cherished by Tagore till his death. There can be no doubt that in this particular field an immense progress can now be seen inspite of tremendous obstructions. This year through the Centenary Celebrations all over the world will be heard the voice of Tagore pleading for international peace and friendship and his firm faith in the ultimate happiness of human destiny. This year will see the publication in Russian of a representative selection of Tagore's works in twelve volumes. *Gitanjali*'s Russian translation was done from English, and that was before the Revolution. Now in the Soviet Union interest in Bengali language and literature has made rapid progress. Quite a number Russian men and

women have taken up the difficult task,—to learn Bengali without having the chance of coming to Bengal and learn from the Bengalis. The Oriental Faculty of the Leningrad University where Bengali is taught with regularity and care attracts student even from Peking and Berlin. Russian translators of Rabindranath's works do not now depend on previous English or French models. They have straight access to the Bengali original. Such an extensive arrangement for translating Tagore from the original Bengali text is not known in any other major language of the world. The examples they have set in rendering faithfully his lyrical pieces are really striking. The sonorous quality of the original, including stanza-formation and rhyme-scheme is carefully attended to. And whatever their success, it is due entirely to their own efforts, the share of Bengali co-operation being hardly present. And the scope of this co-operation at the present time is also very limited, because Bengali scholars with adequate knowledge of Russian language and literature who alone can effectively contribute in such a co-operation are practically non-existent. The Russian translators from Bengali are looking forward to the day when Russian will be studied more extensively in Bengal, so that their labour will be critically reviewed, imperfections pointed out and improvements suggested. In memory of Rabindranath as a true friend of the Soviet Union, this year should see organised efforts being made for the larger propagation of Russian Studies among ourselves. While recognising in this connection the claim of the Russian language, we cannot ignore the importance of world languages like French, German, Chinese and Spanish. This is our heavy responsibility—the responsibility of being the inheritors of Rabindranath's glory. Rabindranath himself acknowledged the manifold heritage he had received from Rammohan and Vidyasagar, Madhusudan and Bankimchandra and he has left behind him a call to his descendants to be worthy of their onerous good luck.*

*Based on a lecture delivered on the 21st February 1961, as a part of Tagore Centenary Celebrations organized by the Corporation of Calcutta.

Tagore's Educational Faith

PROF. SUNIL CHANDRA SARKAR



It is well known that Tagore found the system of education current in his student days wholly repugnant and wasteful. It was merely utilitarian and valued because it was supposed to provide better chances of employment. Naturally, it failed to attract the pupils and demanded nothing of them except a period of dull compliance with routine and cheerless mental labour. To Tagore, however, education was a total process involving the entire personality of the pupil and this could not take place at all except on the basis of a free and full self-giving on the part of the pupil. That is why faith in an ideal, self-dedication to some high purpose was essential. But Western education in modern times has more or less cut itself adrift from all shades and varieties of idealism lest the 'authoritarianism' supposed to be inseparably associated with idealism should in some manner or other prejudice its democratic profession and practice. This has resulted in a gradual disintegration of the atmosphere of respectfulness, reverence and aspiration, of total self-giving and sustained effort which any educational plan for the growth of human personality could seem to require. This is one of the reasons why Tagore harked back to the earlier days of our civilization and wanted to revive the *Tapovana* ideal. During the forty years of his life which he gave to the *Asrama* of his making, he had occasion to doubt the adequacy of the ideal he had offered in the beginning, and as days passed he had to reformulate it from time to time, but he never wavered in his demand for faith on the part of both teachers and pupils in some high all-inclusive purpose. The results produced by this demand are stated below in general terms and it is hoped that all who have had some acquaintance with the experiment will bear it out.

In a number of cases not very small there was a sincere and whole-hearted acceptance of the ideal in a more or less high form and with them education became a life-long adventure of

exploration, experience and growth. Examples of entire families building up their lives on the faith and inspiration they had at Santiniketan and finding their greatest happiness in that creative endeavour are not at all rare. With the majority of persons the results were, of course, not so spectacular, but they were certainly more satisfactory and convincing and very much less wasteful than what one finds among the average products of traditional education. It is, of course, possible, or even inevitable that there will always be a percentage incapable of responding to the call. In these days when the enforcement of compulsory education is supposed to be normal and there is no compunction in elderly hearts in subjecting children to programmes of unwanted learning for the sake of remote prospects of employment, one may be tempted to hold such requirement of 'faith' unnecessary, unreal or impossible to fulfil. But Tagore's experiment would show that such a demand is not so unrealistic after all, that, it is capable of producing satisfactory results in quite a large number of cases. And where it fails, it may not indeed be worthwhile to force instruction down the unwilling throats and gain nothing but a huge educational waste as education in our country is doing even now.

The real problem was to find an ideal which would be intelligible and acceptable to most men, which would inspire and actuate their best efforts at self-education and which would at the same time have some effective connection with progressive movements in this country and all over the world, with the evolutionary forward-thrusts of humanity as a whole.

In 1901, when he started Santiniketan, Tagore was deeply imbued through his studies and his personal *sadhana* profoundly influenced as it was by the Maharshi's example with the spirit of India's ancient spiritual aspiration, her *Tapovana* ideal and *Upanishadic* culture. A sense of a new dawn, a spiritual renaissance in the

country had seized his mind and imagination and he passed through a series of emotional experiences, a record of which exists in his *Naiṛedya* poems. So, naturally he wanted to use the old spiritual ideal and discipline shorn of the adventitious offshoots that had grown around them during the centuries and made acceptable to modern mind. The non-sectarian, universal character of *Upanishadic* teachings was itself of great help as the Maharshi had already found it. But after all, it was a spiritual ideal, and although Tagore demanded of the few chosen pupils and teachers who came to join the institution, an adherence to this ideal, he was certainly not sure that it would work with any except the exceptional few in this age of scepticism, wilful distortion and falsification of all that is true and noble. And yet he was driven, by an inner compulsion, to try the experiment.

The booklet '*Brahmacharyasram*' contains a Report of Tagore's exhortations to the first few pupils on the day of inception and the first body of rules and regulations for the guidance of students and teachers, their mutual relationship, duties, attitudes to different aspects of the *Asrama* life and others.

In this first address he talks of education as '*Brata*' (ब्रत) an *Askesis*, and of God as the ईश्वर, the Lord of *Askesis*. He holds out the idea of something exceeding our pettiness, something great and eternal as the object of pursuit and urges the cultivation of such virtues as heroism, truthfulness, goodness. The task to be accomplished was to purify body and mind, pursue truth, keep the mind cheerful and free from doubt and fear, work for the well-being of all and learn to make willing sacrifice of personal interests for that purpose, and thus gradually grow into a realisation of *Brahma*, the Vast, the Universal, both within the self and without. The *Asrama* was to be characterised by solitude, strict compliance with rules prescribed by rejection of worldly luxuries and superfluous amenities and things, repression of evil propensities, high reverence for the ideal and its protagonist, the *Guru* and a spirit of dutifulness and service. The relationship between the teacher and the taught must be spiritual, he asserted. And in the list of rules he mentioned even certain daily practices

and rituals and meditation with the help of the *gayatri mantra* (ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय)।

It is indeed curious that the apostle of the new humanism who had waged its war not only against protagonists of Hinduism, of the *Santanu Dharma*, like Bepin Pal and Chandranath Basu but also against the great Bankim, should now himself be an avowed sponsor of that cult. Two reasons can be suggested in explanation of this stand. The chief certainly was that he had seen this *Upanishadic* religion, as revived and practised by his father, assume under his inspiration a living form broad enough to hold all the elements of an East-West cultural synthesis which one would like to include. So what he found to be true at his family house at Jorasanko, he thought, he could apply at the new institution of his making. The other reason would be clear from what he himself wrote at the time : "If only we could give our own nature the freedom of full self-realization in the domain of greatness which belonged to our country, we could thereby, by that very process, pass on to universalism. But we would get nothing by way of self-development and progress if we simply, by allowing what was our own to crumble and perish, sought to merge ourselves with others. It would indeed seem more desirable even to carry loyalty to our indigenous tradition and ways to an extreme point than foolishly ape an alien-culture and consider ourselves blessed."

What occasion of wounded self-respect, what sense of national frustration wrung this most un-Rabindrian utterance from him we need not here explore. But we may state here that this is only the exception which proves the rule and reveals one of the most distinctive features of Tagore's personality : His life-long urge to break narrow moulds of custom and thought and embrace realities wider and more inclusive. His Santiniketan experiment, even like his life of literary creativity and his public life, is indeed a succession of dramatic breaking of barriers, reaching out into vaster fields and opening up of wider horizons.

The book '*Brahma-Vidyālaya*' by Ajit Chakravarty, one of the most distinguished members of Santiniketan in its early years, is indeed a very

important document for our present purpose, reviewing as it does the first eleven years' work at the institution. Chakravarty depicts in this book with admirable insight and understanding the series of trials and critical situations that came one after another during these years, at moments threatened complete disintegration of the *Asrama* and repeatedly tended to deflect it from its avowed aim. Brahma-Bandhab Upadhyay, the famous religious reformer, who, presumably attracted by Tagore's '*Naivedya*' poems and the type of sentiment he allowed himself to express in these years as quoted above, came to join the school as first principal, sought to make it the training ground of a rigid religious cult. He was adamant in forcing upon everybody his own ideas and ways and sought to obtain results by strict enforcement of rules. He left Santiniketan after a year as he realised, as also did Tagore, that their paths were different. Chakravarty very acutely points out in this connection the difference between Upadhyay and the Maharshi. The latter would give opportunity of free development to everybody and like each to grow in spiritual experience in his own way. Tagore's approach was wholly like his father's. But the Upadhyay would like to cast everybody in the same mould, the mould of his own invention. This dogmatic approach went so far that Tagore had even to accept the distinction of castes as a social reality and accede to separate arrangements in the kitchen for Brahmins and lower castes. But soon the stifling narrowness, the cress inhumanity, the absurd rigidity of the system became so revolting to him that he broke through it once for all. And his demand ever afterwards was for inner attraction and willing compliance and not for external conformity to rules. The Upadhyay episode made him see how his first statements of aim could defeat its own purpose and fall an easy prey to orientalism, *Sanatani Hinduism*, pastism, ritualism or to any such limited aim and thus effectively exclude the universal element that he sought. One other thing also he realised. It was likely to achieve his aim. Not by shutting out all kinds of experience, but by accepting all that might lead to the universal, all that is positive and meaningful in man's cultural heritage, should he proceed on his path.

Then came the challenge of 'academicism,' a period when bookish studies were given an excessive stress. Chakravarty observes in this connection, "Rabindranath was keen, that along with academic studies, there should also a true awakening of the mind and heart. And this was what Satish's teaching achieve." Satish Roy, the young poet and teacher, who after serving the institution as nobody else has since been able to do, died a premature death at Santiniketan, was remembered and frequently praised by Tagore as the one teacher, who could bring to the institution an atmosphere of learning through joyous experience. The great value of Satish's contribution lies in the fact that what he accomplished as a devoted follower of Tagore's spirit within just one or two years set once for all the tone and standard of the *Asrama*'s life and the direction in which it must thereafter grow. The conflict, indeed, between the claims of academic work and that of free growth has never completely ceased and remains even to-day a matter of heated, even angry, debate among different sections of teachers. This dispute, however, relates only to the degree of emphasis to be given to academic studies. The place in the life of the *Asrama* of the positive approach as exemplified by Satish has never been questioned. The world of emotional, aesthetic and spiritual experience which Tagore created through his plays and songs for his students and which has made Santiniketan what it is was a consummation of that positive approach.

A tougher challenge came with the *Swadeshi* movement in 1905-7 of which Tagore himself was one of the most devoutly respected leaders. But the frenzy of the movement displeased him and he hastened from the troublous scene of agitation to the peace of Santiniketan. It was some inner treasure, some principle of universal significance to man which he sought to save from harm and would not allow it to be sacrificed even at the altar of patriotism. A wave of public indignation followed him from Calcutta to his abode of peace and gave it a rude shaking. Here also, as in the two former cases the opposition was between his ideal and something which resembled it but was in reality only one of its elements or aspects unduly accentuated, or magnified out of

all proportions, and made to serve a much lesser purpose. Tagore was firm in following his path of broad humanity and 'universalism'—very much misunderstood and much maligned though it always was. In these cases of controversy between something total, inclusive and great on the one hand and something fragmentary, partial and limited on the other, he excelled in the same manner as his father did. He widened the 'whole' till it included and held integrated within itself all that was of real worth in the dissident parts. Tagore's ideal gave a just place in itself to ancient Indian Culture, *Sanatana Dharma*, academic studies and patriotism and would not allow any of these elements to grow beyond its legitimate proportions and cover or kill the larger impulse.

Tagore's role in tackling these conflicting forces and ideologies became unmistakable and clear in the first few years of the *Asrama's* life. Some other forces which found entry into the *Asrama* life as though by a pre-arranged plan were dealt with in the same masterly manner. Although apparently quite contrary to Tagore's idealism, they were neither wholly repulsed nor given the undue importance they claimed. Mention may be made here of the self-support, self-help, and social service ideas that *Gandhiji* brought with himself and the members of his own *Asrama* who found shelter at Santiniketan on their arrival from South Africa and spent there a month. Ever since that time Santiniketan has been celebrating with love and respect this first visit by the Mahatma on the annual *Gandhi Purnima* day. Tagore appreciated this Gandhian contribution, sought to include the spirit within the ambit of his ideal but found it impossible to devote to these things the time and importance in the day's programme that it would demand.

And there was always the danger of *Gandhiji's* practical programme degenerating in unwary or untrained hands into mere utilitarian labour, unabashed vocationalism. Tagore firmly and wisely tackled this by subordinating all experience and activity to the atmosphere which he himself created of 'joyous adventure'. But there was one extraneous element which came from the public which he was forced to accept by necessity of circumstances, but which he could never really extenuate or condone or fit into his scheme. The

system of public examinations was foisted on Santiniketan. The Visva-Bharati courses which organised studies parallel to the examination courses but offered much greater freedom to individual students in selecting the nature and extent of their own studies continued for many years with success and turned out some of the most distinguished *alumni* of the *Asrama*. But these courses attracted only a few talented students. And with the incorporation of the Visva-Bharati as a Central University these courses automatically ceased to be.

Tagore's ideal and approach in these early years was very ably summed up by Chakravarty in his review thus : "The aim of education was to realise oneself fully by union with all, to disentangle and dissolve knots of difficulty within one's own personality through activity, to become pure and full of joy, to find poise and the consummation of one's aspiration in God...." And within this framework, Chakravarty pointed out, could be put any and every element, principle or occupation that one desired, viz., service to the country or the society, pursuit of knowledge, social reform, rural reconstruction, music, literature and the arts and crafts, and even work with tools and machines. The chief object was to have freedom, to extend the frontiers of love and goodness.

In the addresses included in the booklet Visva-Bharati already referred to, Tagore's self-adjustment to the new situations which arose from time to time, his catholicity and ingenuity in admitting new elements without allowing his central purpose to suffer perversion or deflection can very well be traced. The two most important modifications that he made in the statement of his aim were firstly, that he gave the utilitarian element, the vocational purpose also a place in his scheme although in the beginning he had started almost with a repudiation of any such interest. Secondly, although up to end of his life he repeatedly talked about the spiritual element in his experiment, the demand that he made on his students became more realistic and moderate than at the beginning. He referred more to the Universal Man and the culture appropriate to that concept than to faith in God and the *sadhana* of God-realisation. This created, quite unwarranted-

the impression among a section of his disciples that Tagore receded farther and farther from belief in a personal God with progress in years and ultimately ended by accepting an impersonal universal, something within the reach of Reason and the enlightened mind of man. But in his *Religion of Man* he explicitly mentions the divine element in his concept of the Universal Man and frequently uses phrases like the Universal Person, the Supreme Person to denote the same ideas.

The fact is this. Tagore's triumph lay in formulating a faith generally acceptable to modern man and yet not arbitrarily restricted by the usual humanistic notions of the natural limitations of man. Tagore offers the widest, highest and most varied programme of cultural fulfilment accessible to all men of sensitive nature and aspiration for self-improvement and crowned with the prospect of an endless journey beyond, the assurance of a highest fulfilment which might take different shapes with different individuals and yet belong to the order of the Universal. And this culmination, as shown by Tagore was not merely a vague, insubstantial nothing, poetic myth, an opportunity of escape, but a real power which could hold in its grip the will of the individual and lead him forward on his own path of progress. In his poetry this element appears as the New, the Far-off, the Companion of the Road, the eternal birth-day ; in his educational ideal also this sentiment for the New and the Unforeseen plays a very decisive part and helps each of his followers to work out his destiny through a process of self-creation.

Speaking about the 'openers' of the ideal, one would remember how in incorporating a statement of Tagore's ideal in the Visva-Bharati University Act, the Indian Parliament decided after a debate, to expunge the phrase 'in the name of the *Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam*—the reality which is 'All Peace, All Good' and irrefragably one. Tagore never withdrew in his life from the position of unreserved self-dedication to this what he thought to be the highest and widest principle capable of including and fulfilling all the infinitely varying demands of unique individual growth. And he generally found at Santiniketan that persons belonging to all races, religions and

creeds could willingly accept it. But it might be and actually was difficult or remote and unreal to the understanding of many. So, Tagore himself did not hesitate to exempt them from following an ideal they could hardly appreciate and tone it down for them with reassuring statements like these :

"In our country ordinary people understand by *Sadhana*, an effort towards spiritual salvation, a quest along the path of total self-denial and renunciation. But the purpose which made me establish the *Asrama* at Santiniketan was not indeed very remote from the realm of culture and mental improvement of the average man. 'Culture' is indeed a very complex and curious process ; it purifies and refines the mind, retrieves it in the state, as it were, of an old, encrusted and pale ore, and invests it with its due lustre and value. Many are the branches of culture ; and the human mind, whenever it is able is to keep itself in a state of normal health and vigour, finds itself naturally drawn to these various forms of cultural pre-occupations. My purpose was to provide the amplest opportunities of such cultural development and pursuits at the Santiniketan *Asrama*." (*Address*, 1945).

But ever and again he would reiterate the full demand in the case of persons who were supposed to be equal to the task. This is what he said practically at the end of his years and as also of his association with the Santiniketan experiment :

"To-day I remember a day forty years back At that time the external scene here was marked on all sides with bareness and solitude but within the mind there always remained an assurance of fulfilment. I had then sought, with single-minded purpose, to remove all the triviality, meanness and arrogance which have come to be characteristic features of these times, to admit those whose educational guardianship I had accepted to the perennial fountainhead of the age-old *Sadhana* of India."

"I would urge you not to shut the doors of your mind against this *tapasya* actuated to do so by the irreverent arrongance of modern times. Acknowledge and accept it."

The result of this flexibility was that among those who have been able to give life-long allegi-

ance to Tagore's ideal there is a section, not very small, which has accepted the full aim and combined the cultural programme with some inner experience and expectation of spiritual realisation; but the vast majority has accepted the cultural ideal mainly and preferred to leave the prospects of a journey beyond clothed in a poetic haze, as a remote unspecified image and inspiration or in certain cases as a mere romantic myth making no demands on their inner choice or practical living.

Tagore was quite conscious as we have already observed, that what our times needed most urgently was a new faith, as will be apparent from this passage written in 1923. "The time has now come when humanity can only be saved by the awakening of a new faith. For this, the one thing that is needed, most of all, is to make a place in our education for some great idealism." Looking back, after all these years, at Tagore's purpose and achievement one can unhesitatingly say that he did succeed in giving generations of his disciples a new idealism and faith which spread through them to ever-widening circles of admirers and followers and bids fair to become a world-movement. The accumulating individual evidence, written or spoken, of men of unimpeachable integrity like e.g. Ajit Chakravarty, Jananendra-nath Chattopadhyay, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sudhiranjan Das together with the multiplying and spontaneously sprouting *Asramik Saughas* (*alumni* associations) and institutions and func-

tions associated with his name in this country and abroad would show that the faith Tagore evolved at Santiniketan has worked on a world-wide basis. The hope that he expressed at the beginning of the experiment in the words quoted below from his preface to Satish Roy's *Gurudakshina* has come true. "It is the *Sadhana* of a few persons which can and does bring fulfilment to a whole country. India also shall gain her liberation through the liberation of a few of her greatest sons—a few *tapavans* will unclothe the inner bondage of the entire nation."

In concluding an account of this first aspect of the experiment, we may therefore say, that Tagore succeeded in making a great contribution to modern education :—

(a) by giving it a generally acceptable ideal and faith which modern scepticism and scientific positivism had taken away from it,

(b) by keeping this ideal free from unwanted admixture with lesser aims and consequent lowering or confusion of standards, side-tracking of issues and similar other forms of educational failure or in consequence too well-known in our day, and

(c) by keeping the ideal 'open' and capable of unlimited development, not through the formulation of any precise spiritual or religious faith or cult and its imposition on everybody but by making living, vividly real and effectively operative a sentiment for the New and the Unforeseen, a belief in the possibility of unlimited self-growth for everybody.

When a man does not realise his kinship
with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose
walls are alive to him, when he meets
the eternal spirit in all objects,
then is he emancipated.

— S A D H A N A .

পারস্য হইতে প্রত্যাভর্তন
দমদম বিমান-ঘাটতে - ১৯৩২



The Poet flies back from Persia
(At Dum Dum Aerodrome 1932)



চন্দননগরে গঙ্গাবক্ষে
১৯৩৫

ON HOUSE-BOAT AT
CHANDANNAGAR, 1935



Religion of a Poet

DR. SIDDHESWAR BHATTACHARYYA

THE many sided genius of Rabindranath Tagore has posed a fundamental question : What is, after all, the hard core of Tagore's genius ? Is he a poet, a philosopher, a lyricist, a dramatist, a singer, a painter, a story-teller, a letter-writer, a critic, a novelist or a humanist ? Is he all in one ? If he is, what comprises the vital chord of his being ? Or, is he just the medley of discordant notes ?

The voice of the Poet himself has silenced all fumbings in this issue. He has given the verdict. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday celebration at Santiniketan, he declared that he bore the only credential of a poet, nothing but a poet. He has echoed the same note from time to time. It was the corroboration of his considered opinion based upon the total perspective of his life.

What makes a man poet ? As ancient tradition would have it, a poet can vision the past. According to his own testimony, Tagore had such vision at least thrice in his life. First, when he was a boy of twelve. At the initiation ceremony of Brahminhood, the meaning of *gayatri* instilled into him the vision : Reality has bound at one end the physical world, and the intellect of man at the other. The second vision was on him when he was eighteen or twenty. The golden light of the morning sun had penetrated through the veil of darkness. Tagore could suddenly feel that divine touch awakens man from his slumber of ignorance to commence his eternal journey to the Infinite. Tagore has treasured this vision in his well-known poem, the *Awakening of a spring*. His third vision invaded him by the side of the river *Padma*. He was watching the joyous scramble of children trying to push a fishing boat into the river. He could suddenly visualize the eternal store of life diffusing itself in myriads of individual lives.

To sum up the visions : Man and nature are bound together in organic unity ; life eternal has expressed itself through the living world ;

and, man's life is a pilgrim's progress to the Infinite.

Besides visions, every experience of nature was for Tagore a matter of joy. He could see in the dew-drop, saturated with the crimson light of the rising Sun, the reflection of Infinite—the generous giving of Its blissful self. Its message permeated the vast horizon studded with innumerable stars. Its fragrance was borne by the wind. The sombre tranquillity of the deep sea was pregnant with its presence. In the mind of man, the presence of the Blissful was equally infectious. Indeed it constituted the very core of man's existence.

Tagore, the poet, earnestly tried to relate his visions and his ordinary experiences to the past. What was the result ? He discovered the cosmic Man of the *Rig-Veda*, the reality that pervaded the past, the present and the future of the world, and yet transcended it. He discovered the Supreme Person of the *Yajur-Veda*, whose splendour shines above darkness. Tagore anchored all fragmentary knowledge—vision as well as ordinary experience to this great Person, affirmed by the *Rig-Veda*, confirmed by the *Yajur-Veda*, sung by the *Upanisads* and subsequent religious literature, and held fast by devout souls. In short, the all-embracing *Purusa*, was the grand heritage of India ; and by touching upon this central truth that India has stood for across the ages, Tagore proved that he was essentially a poet, the discoverer of the past.

But for Tagore the discovery of India's noble heritage was not mere satisfaction of intellectualism. The Great Person was so vital to him. The Ultimate was not the metaphysical abstraction denuded of all personal reference. Nor was it the fact, the pet idol of the scientists. The great Person was Reality, in whom man could find his consummation.

The Great Person is endowed with three natural powers—willing, knowing and feeling. By His will, God—the Great Person is so called—has

created the world which, in course of its evolution, has found its climax in man. Man and nature are thus two poles of God's creation. God's will has taken the shape of natural laws of the physical world. His knowing shines on man. His feeling or love is for all creation. But like His knowing, it is palpably felt in man. Beauty of the world is the expression of God's joy through the finite.

The Infinite, the formless, takes on form on which it reflects its blissful nature. But form is ever-changing, so that God's blissful nature may have perpetual renewal. So, one form is transcended by another. In fact, it is the progressive journey of forms to reach the formless. When this end is reached, begins the creation of fresh forms. One may look upon this phenomenon as re-creation after deluge. So God, the Great Person, is the unity of form and formlessness. Assertion of one aspect or the other, is a partial presentation of God. Form and formlessness belong to the very nature of God. They are indispensable to each other.

Man is the image of God. So, like God, man is also endowed with form and formlessness. Form is man's ego while formlessness is his soul. The soul and the ego are as much bound together and indispensable to each other as the Infinite is related to the finite. Like God, man is also endowed with three natural powers—willing, knowing and feeling. Just as forms of the world are marching to the formless, so the ego of man is meant for the fulfilment of the spirit. This means that man should develop his willing, his knowing and his feeling in such a way that they can assert the glory of man's spirit. The criterion of the success of the inherent powers of man is : whether man's willing, willing and knowing conform to those of God. When man merges his individual will into the will of God, his knowledge into the knowledge of God and his love into God's love, he is thereby said to have asserted the rights of the spirit in him. At this stage, man feels that what he does is really the fulfilment of God's will through him ; he knows then that, like his own self, all selves are related to God. The

discovery of integral relationship between God and all selves, introduces him to his natural relationship with all selves. So love of God on his part develops into love for all selves. For Tagore, God is man's God and the world of God is man's world. So love for humanity is the indispensable destiny of man, because love for humanity is nothing but love for God.

In this development of his inherent powers, man is not left alone. God reigns in man and His grace radiates upon him to make of him what he should be. He kindles man's will with His will, his knowledge with His knowledge and his love with His love. Yet, man is not a helpless medium to be done upon by God. Man has freewill. It is his free gift from God. So it is man's free choice to unfold himself before the powers of God. Man is not slave to God. They are two free beings that unite in the partnership of equality. God is related to man as the father is to the son.

So, out of free choice, man seeks the help of God to develop himself. He gives expression to his will, with divine help, through incessant activity. His growing knowledge reveals that he is grounded in God. His growing feeling intensifies itself into love for God and therefore love of all men. The simultaneous operation of three powers in man renders him into a pilgrim. He is perpetually given to activity even after his physical death ; he feels at every step that he is united with God ; he finds his activity and knowledge prized by the realization of love for all.

Thus out of joy, man is given to the creation of beautiful forms ; and the goal of such creation is also nothing but joy that love of humanity stands for. Knowledge is the bridge between creation and joy. He moves for ever ; yet he is perpetually settled in God. This is the pilgrim's progress, the perennial flight of the bird to the infinite sky, the unending journey of the waterfall to the ocean, close partnership of man to God's creation. This is salvation. Given to this salvation, Tagore has not left us. He has diffused his being in human love that expresses itself in the welfare of humanity.

तिनि रयेछेन जेथाय भक्तिमरे करेछे चापा चाप
पाथर भेडे काटछे जेथाय पथ खाटछे वारोमास ।

जेथाय थाके सबार अधम दीनेर हते दीन
सेइखाने जे चरण तोमार बाजे ।



Rabindranath's Shelidah

SACHINDRANATH ADHIKARI

TO ANY devout student of Tagore's life and literature, Rabindranath's Life at Shelidah will be considered to be the fountain head of his immortal contributions to the world. As a poet, philosopher and worker, he derived his inspiration mainly from those beautiful rural areas of Shelidah village situated on the confluence of the mighty Padma and Gorai. By providence he took charge of his ancestral Zamindaries in the neglected rural areas in the districts of Nadia, Patna and Rajshahi at the fag end of the nineteenth century. At that time village homes were mostly abandoned by the landlords and intelligentsia of our country. The flowers of our society had a fashion to desert their village homes to the clutches of poverty and malaria and seek shelter in cities and towns for comfort, luxury and opulence. It was Rabindranath who selected the rural abode of his Zemindary to settle with his family in 1897 'far from the madding crowd' ignoble strife of city life. He refashioned Shelidah *Kuthibari* for family dwelling with permanent kitchen garden, cookshed and other necessities of residence.

For education of his children he invited the services of eminent teachers like Mr. Lawrence, Shibdhyan Bidyarnab, Jagadananda Roy and others. He constructed a road from Shelidah to Kushtia for convenient communication with Calcutta via Kushtia town. References in support of this statement are innumerable in his letter and other writings. As a poet of nature and a responsible man on the spot in Zemindari management, he was urged to effect all these improvements for leading a congenial and peaceful life for himself and his tenants.

Shelidah, on the mighty Padma and Gorai, is a place where borders of these districts, viz. Nadia, Patna and Faridpur met. The vast sandy *char land* with beautiful landscape of distant village influenced his poetic inspiration and crea-

tive faculty. There he got ample opportunity to take an intimate study of rural people as they had to mix with him as his tenants. There he had close relations with *Bouls*, *Baisnabs*, *Fakirs* and *Mussafirs* who bore the original culture of Bengal in their hearts, and the Poet drank it to his heart's content from his early youth. There he had a glimpse of Bengal, past and present, and keenly felt an urge for constructing Bengal of tomorrow.

The charming village, besides its natural beauty and pleasing environments of overflowing Padma, Gorai and Ichhamati, had other attractions too for its easy river communications. From Calcutta he could start by the Bhagirathi and reach Shelidah and could tour over other important *Mahals* by boat. Railway journey from Calcutta to Shelidah via Kushtia or Kumurkhali took five or six hours only. He generally lived in his comfortable houseboats named *Padma Chitra* and *Nagar* after the demise of his wife Mrinalini Debi. The rivers, Ganga, Bhagirathi, Padma, Ichhamati, Jamuna, Boral, Atrai, Nagar, Chalan Beel and several '*Khals*' provided pleasant boat journeys for visiting Zemindaries and were much helpful in his writings and philosophical contributions.

Shelidah was the headquarters of his above-named three estates and he naturally preferred to live at Shelidah permanently as he loved from the very core of his heart. The picturesque village and the Padma, which he described in his poems sometimes as his sweetheart and sometimes as "*Manash Sundari*." He enjoyed with ecstasy the riverine company in his golden boat (*Sonar Tari*) in close accompaniment with his "*Bidesini*" his inner inspiration and ferried the both banks in his "*Kheya*" as if visiting heaven and earth in the boat of life.'

The last poem of '*Sonar Tari*'

“আর কতদূরে নিয়ে যাবে মোরে হে স্তন্দরী
কোথায় ভিড়িবে তোমার তরী।”

Before his marriage, Rabindranath in his boyhood visited his beloved Shelidah with his elder brother Jyotirindranath. Abdul Majhi and the trouble over hunting a tiger in a torrent of the Padma, his intimacy with Biswanath Banna in hunting tiger in a jungle at Shelidah and his boyish adventure of painting with the juice of flowers from *Kuthibari* gardens are the interesting stories told by him. His unique description of "Manager Babu" (*Galpa-Salpa*, page 57) is a pen-picture from his fanciful memory of feudal Zemindari customs which he had to observe before he himself became a Zemindar.

According to the instructions of his father Maharshi Devendranath, the poet in his early youth had to learn the work of Zemindari *Sheresta* and family accountancy first at Jorasanko house and then at Shelidah and Patisar Estate. Thus his knowledge of Zemindari affairs was superb and Pramatha Chowdhury, Bar-at-law (pseudonym "*Birbal*" in the Bengali literary world) who married Poet's second brother's daughter Indira Debi, described—"Rabindranath was unique as a Poet and also as a Zemindar" in his book "*Ragater Katha*." Pramatha Chowdhury had ample opportunity of studying the Poet-Zemindar in this aspect while he acted as the Managing Agent of the Tagore Estates during the Poet's sojourn in Europe.

The history of Shelidah is shrouded in some legendary tales handed down from our ancestors. Shelidah was originally an indigo-planters' Estate. Prince Dwarkanath Tagore purchased it from an European indigo planter named '*Sheli*' and the name "Shelidah" (in Bengali Shilaidaha) is derived from the nomenclature of '*Sheli*.' No history is known of this European indigo planter. It is a wonder that Shelidah the spoken name of the Post Office has become memorable all over the world by the writings of our world Poet. But the revenue-survey name of the village is jointly—Khorshedpur and Kashba.

Khorshedpur has a beautiful legendary anecdote. It was an accreted *char* of Padma founded by Khorshed Faquir, a Muslim mendicant of olden times whose '*Darga*' (Shrine) is still to be found at Shelidah. Another rich merchant (*Banik*) whose name was Jugal Sah is still cherished in popular memory. He dwelt in a

place which sunk into erosion of the '*Krithinashor*' Padma. He built at Shelidah his house and *Kali*-temple which are in ruins. A faint history of the village is available. A weaver named Kalyan Roy who lived at Kalyanpur, two miles east of Shelidah, installed the deity Gopinath Deb when this region was a Zemindary of Raja Sitaram Roy. From Raja Sitaram it passed over to Rani Bhawani of Natore. Raja Ramjiban, the *Natore Raj* lost all his property as he was a devotee of *Kali* and renounced world in search of heavenly bliss. Some portion of his property was purchased by Prince Dwarkanath. He purchased the indigo planter's '*Kuthi*' as well and amalgamated the *moujas* in his Zemindari,—*Pargana Birahimpur* and *Bhar Fategangpur*. The old *Kuthi* building on the banks of the Padma provided the residence of the Tagores on its first floor and their Zemindary office on the ground floor with an extensive garden. This *Kuthi* building was washed away by the erosion of the Padma sometime in 1890.

The present Shelidah residence of Tagore is also known as '*Kuthibari*.' It was built in 1892 by Nitindranath Tagore third son of Dwijendranath Tagore who was a great poet, philosopher and eldest brother of Rabindranath. This '*Kuthibari*' was renovated by the Poet for his permanent family dwelling with flowers and kitchen gardens. Afterwards it transformed into an agricultural research laboratory by the Poets' son Rathindranath and son-in-law Nagendra Ganguly after their studies in America in Botany and agricultural engineering. Some sixty *bighas* of land were acquired from its surrounding areas for the purpose of agricultural experiments for growing more crops. This was done at the direct instance of the Poet Zemindar for improving the agricultural production of his tenants.

The *Kuthibari* is a fine two and half-storied building remarkably suited to a poet's residence with beautiful surroundings overlying the flowing Padma which is visualized from the second floor apartments.

Rabindranath used *Kuthibari* as his residence and offices for Zemindary management. In the ground floor there was a Darbar Hall, guests' room, dining hall, and storeroom. The first floor contained the study room for his children and

dormitory and the room on the second floor was the study room of the Poet himself.

Rabindranath, besides Estate management, had to supply poems, stories, novels, dramas, songs and essays for the literary journals of 'Sadhana,' 'Bharati', 'Banga-Darshan' and others from this peaceful seclusion of Shelidah. Most of his early and middle age writings got their birth at Shelidah, Sajadpur (Estate of Gaganendranath and his brothers) and Patisar, the principal of which was Shelidah where he could live for years together with comfort and contemplation. English translation of *Gitanjali* was done at the Shelidah *Kuthibari*. After the demise of his wife the Poet seldom lived in this house, but lived in his houseboats moored in the banks of the Padma. The Estate offices and tenants had to go to Poets' house-boat for transaction of Estate affairs. The Poet used to roam about in moonlit nights in the sandy clear meadows and moved lonely without any attendant.

The Poet's intimate friends, Sir Jagadish Bose, Shrimati Abala Bose, Raja Jogadindranath of Natore, Lokendranath Palit and Santiniketan teachers and associates had been on many occasions guests of the Poet. He always invited his friends to share with him the joy and beauty of his beloved Shelidah. For entertaining his friends, he arranged *Kirtan* by Shibnath Shah the famous *Kirtan*-Singer and the Poet's tenant. Sometimes *Lathi-play* demonstrations were held by his renowned *Barkandas*—Meser Sardar, Madhu Mal, Ketu Dhali, Haider Sardar and others. The disciples of Lalan Sha Fakir held their musical entertainments at *Kuthibari* and *Kutchery* compound when the villagers were invited to attend. Almost every morning before sunrise the Poet used to walk on foot in the corn fields of adjacent villages.

On the sudden death of Satis Chandra Ray, the most sacrificing and devout teacher of Santiniketan *Asram*, the school of Santiniketan was transferred to Shelidah *Kuthibari* in September 1903 under Mohit Chandra Sen as Headmaster. For more than a couple of months *Kuthibari* compound rang with *Asram* songs, prayers and hummings of students. It was removed that the Poet had in his mind to establish some depart-

ments of Santiniketan at Shelidah in its peaceful fine environments.

Tagore Estates were amicably partitioned in 1920. For some unforeseen reasons Rabindranath had to accept in his share Patisar (Kaligram Pargana and Surendranath, son of his second brother Satyendranath became owner of Shelidah (Pargana Birahimpore). Thus the relations with the Poet was cut off from his much beloved Padma-borne Shelidah. In 1927 he was invited to visit Shelidah by his nephew Surendranath and this was the last time that he saw the verdant green of Shelidah and dancing waves of his sweet Padma.

As a village Shelidah was too poor to claim any cultural centre of the Poet. The locality was peopled with *Jotedars* and peasants, but its charm as a whole captivated the Poet in many directions, which through unknown to many, valuable materials for his future biographers. The Poet's humanism and patriotism are manifest in his village life besides his immortal gifts to the field of work in literature.*

The Poet according to instructions of his elder brother Jyotirindranath started a big handloom factory in the Shelidah *Kutchery* Compound long before the *Swadeshi* movement as an attempt to popularise *Swadeshi* in his Estates. Another factory was started at Kusthia *Kuthibari*. Jute business was also started by his nephews Surendranath and Balendranath at his instance at Shelidah and Kushtia. But all those planned farsighted nation-building adventures ended in failure. All these failures told heavily upon Rabindranath in financial debts, but these failures served as the pillars of success for the future generations. Tagore's sacrifice in nation-building edifice is memorable in our history.

Rabindranath started a private agricultural bank at Shelidah and Kaligram to save the neglected cultivators from the blood thirsty *Mahajans*, the money lenders, which functioned well till

*The famous poem "Dui Bigha Jami" describes a true incident of Shelidah while the Poet was a young Zamindar. The marvellous story "Baisnabi" depicts the *Baisnabi* Poet saw at his residence. Many Shelidah incidents are imperceptibly found in his stories in *Gulpa Guchha*.

1944-45. It is also a fact, that idea of 'Tapoban' as was sponsored at Santiniketan Asram had its birth in the Poet's imagination at Padma-borne Shelidah.

Rabindranath attempted whole heartedly to build Shelidah a prosperous village. He improved the village by constructing roads and drains and wells for providing drinking water. A charitable dispensary, M. E. School, Girls School, Post Office, market place for holding *melas* were established. He loved and favoured 'Rural *melas*'—which he explained in his lecture on "*Swadeshi Samaj*". He organized with the help of village people, '*Katganin Mela*' and '*Saroshi Mela*' on the precincts of Gopinath Temple in a splendid manner for improving social life of his rural tenants. '*Rakhi Bandhan Utsab*' was celebrated once at Shelidah under his presence before his eyes the whole atmosphere rang with his *Swadeshi Songs*—"*Amar Sonar Bangla*" "*Banglar Mati Banglar Jal*" and streams of other patriotic songs that which imparted a new life to Bengal. He reconstructed the ruins of Gopinath's temple house and tank which became a special attraction of Shelidah for the people of adjoining districts who assembled in thousands in the *Rash* and *Snanjatra Melas* of Gopinath Deb.

It was at Shelidah that he first attempted to materialise his ideas of rural reconstruction under

a well defined scheme. I was one of the active members of "*Brati Balakas*" scouts organised by him with the assistance of his officers and we worked to construct an ideal village at *Kandabari* on the western boundary of Shelidah *Kuthibari*. His growing popularity among his peasant tenants was not liked by the then village elders, but still the Poet Zamindar endeavoured to translate his ideas into action for years together in spite of adverse criticism from the educated section of Bengal of that period. At his instance Late Kalimohan Ghose and Mr. L. K. Elmhest and other workers came to Shelidah for rural upliftment.

Shelidah, now in East Pakistan, is unfortunate in losing the valuable guidance of the Tagores specially of Rabindranath who felt in his inner self an infinite love for this beautiful hamlet, as he says in a letter to me that it was the sacred pilgrimage of his youth and middle age and he did not forget the charm of this place till his last days which remained vibrant with golden memories of his poetic life. Shelidah cherishes the hallowed memory of the Poet for eternity. To-day it is the sacred duty of the Government to perpetuate the ever shining memory of the world Poet whose footprints still ennoble the sands of the Padma and the village already become so eminent before the whole world.

*The wriggling snakes tent the air around
with their poisonous breath,
Tender words of peace
will sound like gentle mockery
and so
better, I depart
I send my call out to those
who are preparing in every home
for the battle against the beasts
in human shape.*

TAGORE

চারিদিকে নাগিনীরা ফেলিতেছে
বিষাক্ত নিশ্বাস
শান্তির ললিতবাণী শোনাইছে
বার্ষ পরিশ্বাস।
যাবার আগে তাই
ডাক দিয়ে যাই
দানবের সাথে যারা
সংগ্রামের তরে
প্রস্তুত হতেছে ঘরে ঘরে ॥

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ

The Image of Rabindranath Abroad

DEBESH DAS

*President,
All-India Bengali Literary Conference*



WHILE we offer homage to the world poet whose birth centenary is being celebrated all over the world it would be essential to bear in mind the image he has in the eyes of the entire world. Such a dispassionate study will not only enable us to see him in the proper perspective but will also correct any unbalanced or uninformed notions which we may have regarding him due to over enthusiasm of a devotee or the cynicism of a critic for criticism's sake.

It is true that a proper appreciation of Rabindranath has occasionally been marred or modified by the impact of political trends during the 50 years following his worldwide recognition associated with the award of Nobel Prize. It is also true that the enthusiastic and laudatory appreciation of his works which heralded the dawn of the period of recognition was subsequently dimmed in acknowledged and authoritative books of reference, like *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Sometimes wrong or mischievous interpretation has also been placed on his works abroad. Now is the time to correct those trends and to enable the world at large to appreciate Rabindranath in the proper perspective. If we succeed in doing so, all the tremendous energy and enthusiasm which has been generated for this celebration of Tagore Centenary all over the world, and particularly in India, will have been fruitful in one way. To this end, Bengalis have a very special obligation. This is a debt which we must discharge on this occasion in honour of the perfect man who interpreted us to the world and to ourselves. The *Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammilan* which provided a brilliant curtain raiser in Bombay and was attended by a large number of the celebrated writers and educationists of foreign countries has done something the impact of which will be realised by us more and more. The deep and thoughtful addresses, articles on different aspects of Rabindranath's versatile genius approached from the different angles by intellectuals who have

studied the subjects in spite of the barrier of language are themselves an eloquent and abiding proof of the utility of such celebrations.

The value of this image is all the greater because of the fact that abroad Rabindranath aroused at first only an intellectual curiosity on account of the sudden publicity he received as the winner of the Nobel Prize. Many readers in different countries found his writings vague and elusive in thought and remote in form and imagery. Not many were the people who found in his writings the joy of discovery, the refreshment that comes from contact with another order of mind. But leading intellectuals like Count Keyserling quickly realised that he was the most arresting figure in the mission of bringing together of the East and the West which is the most dramatic and perhaps the most important event of this century. He prepared the bridge between two civilizations as far apart as possible and enabled the world to admit the value of the achievements of both sections of the world and of the spiritual and artistic resources supplied by diversity of temperament.

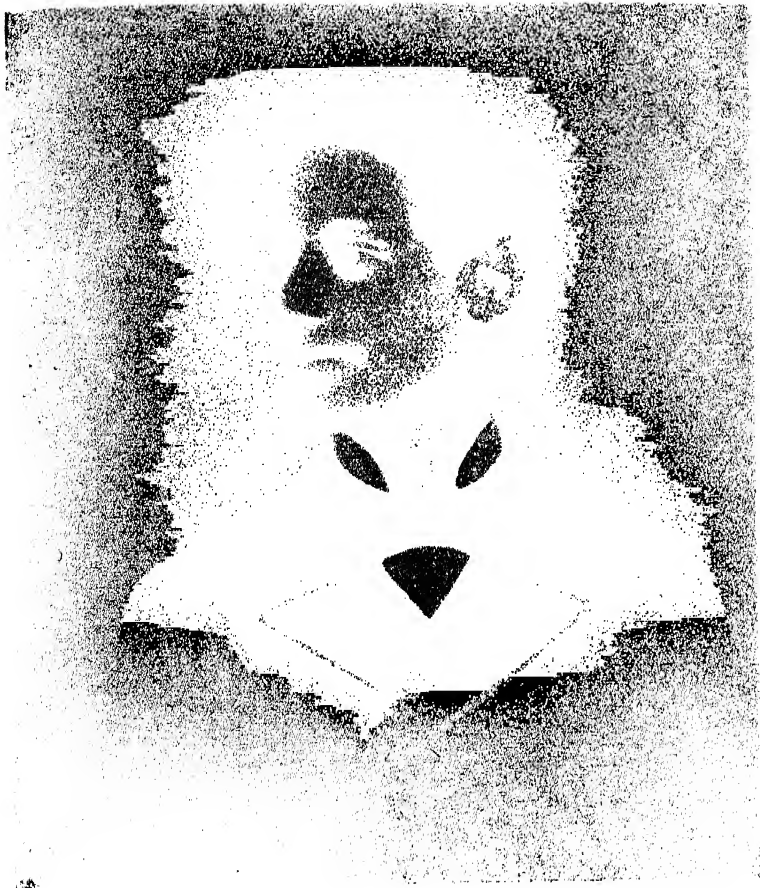
To the average educated man of the West, it is difficult to appreciate the ultimate basis of oriental religion, philosophy and civilization. The language the imagery and the approach of these are uncompromisingly exotic to him. But in Rabindranath he found a new preacher who interpreted the deepest and most characteristic thoughts of ancient world with such clarity and sincerity that nobody could miss his essential message. Noguchi, the celebrated Japanese poet, had attacked him for his anti-imperialist humanism when Japan started its imperialistic career. But Japan itself has outlived that sense of hostility to him and has now realised the value of his message.

Take the case of post-Hitler Germany, for instance. A young Doctor of Philosophy from Germany explained to us in the Bombay celebrations how the philosophy of Rabindranath has enabled young seekers of survival in his war ravaged country to obtain sustenance and to discover a new meaning in life. Take again the statement of Mr. Norman Cousins, the illustrious Editor of the "Saturday Review" of New York. He said that during the unprecedented period of depression in his country in the thirties, youngmen like him found a new meaning in life and in spite of the gloom that spread around, writings of Rabindranath give them glimpses of a world which revived in the heart of people like him the hope and ultimate emancipation from absorption in material interests. Consider again the image rendered by Magnusson, a poet of Iceland, the land of snows and furies of nature where the poet of that practically unknown country found in the writings of Rabindranath a new concept of death which enables people to survive. In this connection we remember the introduction to *Gitanjali* in French written by another Nobel Laureate, Andre Gide, who wrote that he had not come across such deep and beautiful hymns on death in the literature of any other country. He said, though "I am a modern experimenting poet, I am deeply stirred by its great lyrical beauty and its profound "philosophical" significance. To me his poetry is the testament of a great visionary who looked at life with serenity. His poems are echoes from a distant world, caressing our ears that have grown tired (almost to the point of deafness) of the tumult of our violent age, where simplicity has been lost in precious sophistication, bred by our insecurity, bewilderment and fears. We in the West seem to be losing all orientation in the world, we fumble around gasping at sensations, fads and half-truths which bring us constant unrest and inspire ever-new doubts. What a soothing experience for our restless selves to turn to Tagore and find in his work a *total* view of man and his predicament in the universe." It is not enough for people to realise vaguely and generally that the East has much to teach the West in the way of a broader and richer interpretation of both divine and human personality. This thought has come to many a Western intellectual but the new joy of life and the new message

of life and harmony which Rabindranath's poems in particular have brought to the world abroad are the abiding forces which will make the world-poet live through the centuries. Often people have said that it is the elements of mysticism and spiritualism which make his writings immortal. But this is only a partial truth, often expressed without realising that a much greater basis of immortality lies behind his writings, the efflorescence of a perfect man.

The world abroad was once surprised that Rabindranath did not see in the most brilliantly lighted city in the world so much of wonder as he would have been seen in a lotus bud. They were also surprised that in his mild ascetic way, he charged the West with indifference to spiritual things. In reply critics pointed to India, a defeated and conquered nation, as the proof of the fallacy of Rabindranath's preachings. He answered that "the dust in which India's peoples have been bowed is sacred while the bricks with which we, and the West build palaces of our temporal pride are accursed." (Article by Bailey Millard, famous American writer and historian in 1916). No wonder Will Durant in presenting his well-known book "The Case for India" to Rabindranath wrote "You are the reason why India should be free."

Indeed more than ourselves, the best elements in the world at large have made a more comprehensive analysis of Rabindranath. As the University of Paris at Sorbonne expressed in its homage to him during the Bombay celebration, "he, more than any other, understood that such a renewal should proceed from the bringing together and harmonizing of the ideals of the East and of the West; his object was precisely to create that modern humanism which bears within itself the deepest forces of the human being to whom nothing that is beautiful, great and noble is unknown. Of this total humanity, Tagore was himself a model: an incomparable poet, a subtle novelist, a dramatist, a versatile artist, he was also a philosopher and a thinker engaged on the social and political problems of his time." The representative of France also acknowledged that Prof. Sylvan Levi returned what tribute of gratitude is owed by all the students of the world to Rabindranath as an educationist, who, better than

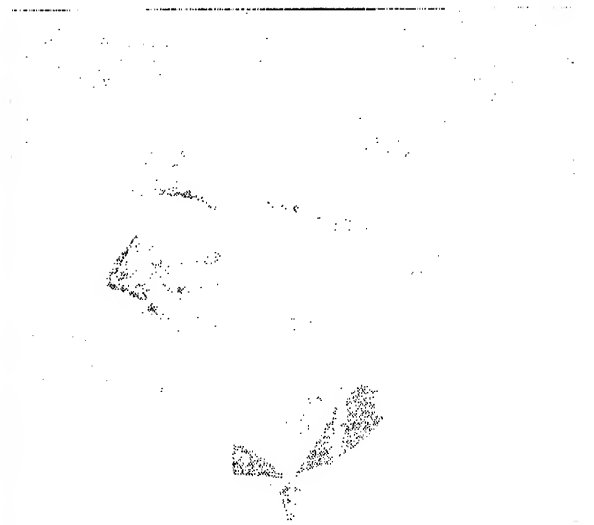


TAGORE AT—SEVENTEEN

রবীন্দ্রনাথ (সতের বছর বয়সে)

Courtesy : Shri Kedarnath Chatterjee

রবীন্দ্রনাথ
৩০ বছর বয়সে



TAGORE AT THE AGE OF 30



A RECEPTION AT SANTINIKETAN AFTER
HE RECEIVED NOBEL PRIZE IN 1913

এ মণিহার আমার নাহি সাজে—
(নোবেল পুরস্কার প্রাপ্তির পর সঞ্চর্ধনা)—১৯১৩

any other knew how to translate into imperishable forms the universal aspirations of the soul to beauty." The Director General of UNESCO also acknowledged in his homage that with his message Rabindranath "was and remains a *Guru* to UNESCO." When we call him *Gurudev* we should rever in our mind "the breath of vision, immense sensivity and intense love of humanity and a burning desire to realise the noble dream of brotherhood of man." (From the Homage of the UNESCO).

Alas, this concept of the universal brotherhood of man has often received big shocks and no wonder the English poet Richard Church has given out a cry of anguish that it is probable that the storms which raged in India and also the whole world including the last World War, might have hastened Tagore's passing away. Poet Church thinks that surely the "serenity of Rabindranath's spirit survived after that and he went out of the world as he came into it—a man marked by a serene balance of mind and emotion moving with a quiet authority to assured purposes that were unshaken by criticism, disappointment and adversity."

In one of his letters, Rabindranath wrote to Elmhirst that he carried an infinite space of loneliness around his soul. This is a sad note which is probably inevitable for a man who yearns to be the complete man, the perfect man. The significant thing is that all such yearning did not reduce him to the despair which too often overclouds the sunset of many great men's lives. He remained to the end illuminated by his passionate belief in the final glory of man. As Karel Jonckhere, a national poet of Belgium observed, "the Flemish poets said of Rabindranath that his wide prophetic figure brought a message to the West to make them better through word, song

and brotherhood." Wherever he went, his Christ-like figure was hailed with reverence and devotion. His march through the world was a procession of triumph but it is not the cheers of the millions or the ecstatic notices in the press that will keep his flame alive through the centuries. As the University of Oxford acknowledged so completely in its homage to him, he is "the myriad-minded poet and writer, the musician famous in his art, the philosopher proved in both word and deed, the fervent upholder of learning and sound doctrine, the ardent defender of public liberties, one who by the sanctity of his life and character has won for himself the praise of all mankind."

The Czechoslovakian Writers' Union has sent us a message high-lighting the poet's struggle for humanity, respect for the inner life of man, for his sufferings and for his destiny. Indeed the world may come to an end but not a poet's message. It would only be proper if the finishing touch to the image of the world poet abroad is given by a national poet of Spain JUAN PEREZ CREUS.

You will live forever
inspite of that day of sorrow
when must come to an end
everything in the world.
When will be no more the Ganges
When the sea will turn into earth
When the earth will turn into a violent
ocean.

Like the sun, like the stars
Illuminating all,
Emerges forth thy figure
Immortal, powerful,
Oh, poet of the poets !
Rabindranath Tagore !

*The eye can not see you,
For you dwell within the eye . .*

—TAGORE

নয়ন শোনায়ে পায়না দেখিতে
বসেছে নয়নে নয়নে—

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ

The first song to be rewarded by Maharsi Devendranath Tagore.



Tagore was no Obscurantist

HUMAYUN KABIR

As a lyric poet Tagore has no equal in world. Perhaps, as a song composer he has no equal in the world. Perhaps, as a poet he has few equals. As a short story writer he is perhaps among the greatest that the world has known. As a painter he started exploring the possibilities of painting when he was well over 60—in all these different fields he has left his stamp, he has left the mark of his achievements and enriched the cultural heritage not only of India, not only of Asia, but of the entire world.

I would like to write of Tagore the man who helped to shape our economic ideals and principles and programmes, Tagore who helped us to conceive our politics in that generous and cosmopolitan and humanitarian way, which we believe is the basis of the political attitude and political programme of our country. I wish to write of Tagore, the educationist, Tagore the economic thinker, and Tagore the political philosopher.

Education is the foundation of society : the teachers of to-day are the arbiters of the destiny of society of to-morrow and the day after. How men are trained, what are the ideals they imbibe what is the type of character that is developed : what is the kind of knowledge that is imparted to them ; what are the disciplines through which they go ; what is the way in which their mind is formed ; —these are the things which are going to shape the destinies of the countries of the world and their inter-relations with one another. And at the very outset I must say that Tagore's ideals of education marked in some ways a revolutionary change from the past, a revolutionary change and yet with a continuity of tradition. Tagore was one of those wise men who believed that revolutions are successful only if they are continuations of the past. A revolution which seeks to break away completely from one's past, any revolution which denies tradition, ultimately defeats itself. And revolutions are successful when all the values of the past are re-discovered,

are taken up and are re-shaped according to the needs of changing times, or reformed to meet the demands of the new age. And Tagore was in that sense essentially an educational revolutionary. He had an educational career which did not go through the normal course. He finished school but he did not go very much beyond school and he found the routine of the school, in particular the dull imposition of text books and its conformity to a number of subjects in which he was not interested, too much for his spirit too much for his mind, and he felt that his mind would not blossom in that way. And what really hurt him most was that this education was divorced from the immediate background of our social life, it was divorced from our cultural traditions, and, most important of all for Tagore, it had no contact with nature.

Tagore believed that education must develop the personality of the child in the context of nature and allow the child to develop in tune with it. He wanted to allow the child to imbibe the beauties of nature, to allow the expanse of the sky, the quietness of the evening and the promise of the morning, the scintillating beauty of the stars and the radiance of the Sun when it rises to permeate the personality of the child ; so that gradually these things became a part of his being, and there was harmony in his inner nature as there is harmony in the world outside. Tagore knew that there are clashes and conflicts in the world outside but he also knew that these clashes and conflicts are always finally overcome, and there is a larger harmony in which the smaller clashes and conflicts always find their place. And therefore he thought that the intellect should be developed, the emotions should be developed volition and will-power should be developed and all these should be done through activity of many kinds. Tagore did not believe in any narrow educational ideals. He did not think that only Art makes a proper education. He did not think that only Mathematics would give a proper edu-

education. He did not think that only Science would give a proper education. But he believed—and he tried to carry out his beliefs in his school which he started in 1901—that all these different aspects of the child's personality must develop harmoniously. He was one of the earliest educational thinkers in recent times who emphasized activity as an essential principle of education. In many ways these ideals have been shared by people in Western countries as well, and also in our country. But Tagore's special contribution was the emphasis on harmony, the emphasis on balance, the emphasis on all-sided development of personality, so that no one aspect was submerged, no one aspect was sacrificed to develop any other aspect. For him beauty must be moral, and morality must be imbedded with the spirit of beauty, and in this way, truth, beauty and goodness—these were three values which he sought to fuse in his educational ideals.

May I now turn to Tagore's contribution to our economic life? One of the things of which modern India is proud, one of the things about which we have great hope—some pride in the achievement that has already been made, and still greater hopes in the promise which they hold—is what we call the community development programme. This programme has become a symbol of hope in the villages. He said that one of the misfortunes of the modern age has been that Shree, grace beauty has left the villages. The village is bereft of grace, bereft of beauty, bereft of culture. Modern culture has become primarily urban. The very word "civilization" shows that it has something to do with cities, and in the modern age, this concentration on cities has become even greater than it was in the past. And the result is that throughout the world there has been a drift of the abler men, of the more imaginative men and women, of men and women of will and vision away from rural areas to the towns. And the consequence of that has been that village life has become even more impoverishet. There is to-day a great gap between the town and the village, and in spite of the admonitions of many great men, of Ruskin some 100 years ago, and of Tolstoy, and Mahatma Gandhi, that people should go back to the villages, nobody goes back to the villages. And bright

boy, any bright girl who gets an opportunity of coming from the village to the town likes to stay there.

Tagore realised this and Tagore said that this vicious circle can be broken not by admonition, not by speaking in lyric terms about the beauties of village life, but by transforming the villages, by changing the pattern of rural life, by making the villages more like towns, so that the great gap which exists to-day between village and town is gradually overcome. People come away from the villages because the villages do not give opportunities of education, do not give opportunities of service, do not give opportunities of the development of personality. They do not have the health services, the sanitary services, the communications and hundreds of other things which make the town such an attractive place for the young man and woman of to-day. And Tagore said that this can be changed only if village life is reconstructed, only if educational facilities are there, health services are there, communications are improved, water supply is provided in an adequate measure, water supply of sufficient quality and sufficient quantity. Only if there are opportunities of service, only if there is opportunity of the fullest expression of personality will men and women stay in the villages. And the programme which we have undertaken today, this community development programme which being accepted by many other countries of the world, is a direct outcome of this awareness. This programme is of special importance in all the less economically developed countries of Asia and Africa, for it is changing the pattern of rural life by bridging the gap, if not completely bridging the gap, at least minimising the gap, between rural and urban conditions.

The condition of village housing is so bad that we are ashamed of it. The condition of planning of roads, of water supply in the villages, is completely inadequate. For over 3,000 years it has continued like that, but in the course of the last ten years since India became Free—a massive effort is being made to change all that and to recapture the old spirit, to bring back conditions where rural sanitation may compare with that of in urban areas, to bring water supply to villages where there was no supply before, to

transform methods of agriculture, to build new systems of rural economy and rural finance. And all this goes under the name of the community development programme, and that is why it is a programme in which we have so much hope and from which we expect so much.

I wish to refer to one other element in this economic ideal of Tagore. Tagore was no obscurantist. He knew that the day of the machine had come. He knew that even though handicrafts had their value, that some of the most beautiful things have been done in the past through sheer manual labour and manual skill, he knew that in the modern world, if you are to provide the services for millions of human beings, the machine will have to be used. All that Tagore wanted was that the machine must be the slave of man, not his master. And he accepted the machine freely and without any mental reservation whatsoever. The pattern of economic civilization which we are seeking to develop in India to-day is in conformity with the ideals of Tagore. It is an economic pattern in which heavy industry will go side by side with consumer industries, a pattern in which there may be certain trades, certain types of industry, certain types of commerce, in which there will be public control and public management, but side by side there will be other spheres of economic activity which will be left to the initiative and freedom of the individual. This pattern of mixed economy, is something which Tagore thought of some 50 years ago and through his example and intuition stressed so long as lived.

And now finally, I come to his contribution to our political ideals. The two main elements are his impact on the foreign policy and his contribution to the conception of the constitution. Our foreign policy, ever since India became Free, has been a policy of harmony, has been a policy of reconciliation. Not that we have not made mistakes, not that we claim that we have always been right, not that we have not occasionally lapsed from our ideals, with all the power at our command, we have endeavoured with all the earnestness that we have to create friendship with our neighbouring countries, and also countries far away and distant. In this

way, India has sought to make a contribution creating in this world a little more of harmony than existed before. And this is the ideal which Tagore taught. Tagore was the first great internationalist in India in the modern age. After Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who went out in the early decade of the last century, Tagore was the first great Indian who went out as an Ambassador of Goodwill. And he came as an Ambassador to Ceylon, he went to Malaya, he went to Indonesia, he went to Burma, he went to India, China, he went to China, he went to Japan, he went to Europe, he went to Africa, he went to North America and he went to South America. In fact, it was after many centuries that an Indian of his status went out again with the message of goodwill, harmony and friendship. And one special feature in this was that for almost 200 years our eyes have been turned towards the Western world. We looked at all problems through British spectacles. Europe has given us much. Europe brought to India a new scientific outlook, a new scientific temper, and brought about the renaissance which has resulted in Indian freedom. But nevertheless this impact of Europe also restricted us because some of our contacts with our nearest neighbours were lost for a while. We had age-long connections with Afghanistan with Iran, with Ceylon with Burma, with Malaya, with Indonesia, with Indo-China, with China, with Japan, with Arabia with Egypt, and for about a hundred years our relations were almost in a state of suspense. Tagore was the first great Indian in recent time who revived this contact, and our foreign policy is following it up. We want friendship and collaboration, the closest co-operation with our neighbours to our East and to our West, to our North and to our South.

Before conclusion I would like to refer to Tagore's contribution to our constitution. My belief is that this is perhaps his richest and deepest contribution to our nation and political life. Our constitution is essentially a Federal constitution, a federal constitution in which the value of every language is recognised, a federal constitution in which the value of every community is recognised, a federal constitution in which the value of every religion is recognized, a federal

constitution in which every race is honoured. Tagore, some 60 years ago, wrote that if God had so wished, he could have made all Indians speak one language. Why India alone ? He could have made all Indians speak one language. Why India alone ? He could have made the whole world speak one language. But the very fact that there are in the world so many different languages, the very fact that in India there are so many different languages, so many different patterns of civilization, so many different flowerings of culture, suggests that there is a divine purpose in all this diversity, there is a divine purpose in this multifariousness of life through which the individual expresses himself. Tagore said some 60 years ago the unity of India has been and shall always be a unity in diversity, a unity in which every language will get its place of honour, a unity in which every religion shall get its place of honour, a unity in which every race shall get its place of honour. And Tagore was right, for history also teaches us that wherever there had been this kind of diversity of peoples, there has been a richer culture, and wherever there has been any attempt at regimentation, wherever there has been any attempt at effacing the peculiar personality of any group or any community within a country, the whole country has suffered.

Another, and in many ways an equally great gift of Tagore is our National Anthem. Of the many things of which India can be proud about Tagore, I believe this is in essence the richest. Every country is proud of its National Anthem, and rightly so. There are even National Anthems where there are references to hatred, to conflicts or there is joy in triumph over the sufferings of some body else. In our National Anthem, which is not a National Anthem for India alone, but a religious hymn for all mankind, there is no suggestion of clash or conflict anywhere. It starts *Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka*, an invocation to the Lord of the heart of all the peoples of the world, not the people of India alone. It seeks welfare for North and South. It acclaims the Lord of the heart of the peoples of the world, as the arbiter of India's destiny. And this song reflects the ideal of Tagore, the ideal of Tagore in politics, where there shall be live and let live, where there shall be friendship and co-operation, where there shall be mutual regard and respect, where there shall be endeavour and co-operative construction for building a world where every single individual, whether he lives in Europe or America, whether he lives in Asia or Africa, every one will be guaranteed the dignity of a man, the rights of a civilized man to live in a civilized world. THIS IS TAGORE'S MESSAGE.

*I felt that I had found my religion
at last, the religion of Man, in which
the infinite became defined in humanity,
and come close to me so as to
need my love and co-operation.*

The Religion of Man

*The individual man must exist
for Man the great, and must express
him in disinterested works, in
science and philosophy, in literature and arts
in service and worship.*

The Religion of Man

*To live the life of goodness is to
live the life of all. Pleasure is for
one's own self, but goodness is concerned
with the happiness of all humanity and
for all time.*

—Sadhana

*When a man does not realise his kinship
with the world, he lives in a prison-house
whose walls are alien to him, when he
meets the eternal spirit in all objects,
then is he emancipated.*

—Sadhana

The Quintessence of our culture

B. N. RAY CHOWDHURY

Raja of Santosh



ONCE I felt the mightiest surprise of my life reading Beverley Nichols describe Rabindranath Tagore as a "minor poet." Hardly ever has anybody come across such an astounding statement in cold print—or even anything that could touch the fringe of such a portraiture. And yet, I set about analysing the truth, or rather the untruth, of such a fantastic notion and the more I did so the clearer and bolder stood the stature and genius of this great Poet of Poets.

The earliest day of my life that I can remember, there came floating a song into my ears which penetrated deep into my soul and has held me in thrall ever since. It was a strange, simple song, a song that the young Bengali cowherd breathed through his frail, bamboo flageolet,—a song that had the fragrance of Bengal's paddy fields and rain-swept mango groves,—the coolness of her moon-blanchèd nights and the soft melody of her noble Ganges ! Yes, that phantom-song was Rabindranath Tagore's ! To millions of Bengali hearts, that song came floating likewise. Its joys and lamentations, its philosophy and wisdom, its passion and pathos, its message and call had the same abiding influence on the lives of every one of us in every walk of life. We cannot weep without humming a note of it ; we cannot love without chanting a line from it ; we cannot pride without giving a thought to it ; we feel no inspiration without its vibrations in our bosom !

A minor stream can only fertilise a small acreage, while a mighty river perennially inspires and impresses the whole, wide world with its rich and beneficent gifts to civilization and humanity. It is never forgotten as old men forget, for such a river is all things to man. Such are the Nile, the Yangtse and the Ganges. They move and turn through eternity in their own grand style. One cannot stop them any more than one can stop Time. They flow like the ages of man and

Tagore's poetry flows likewise without "changelessness," as W. B. Yeats once said of it.

RABINDRANATH is a seer and a sage, he leads to rule the hearts of men and lead them from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. In a world of ever-changing tastes, ever-tumbling values and ever-fleeting forms, the intellectual truth and moral beauty of Tagore's poetry remain bright and untarnished : the very quintessence of our culture and civilization. His message has a universal appeal ; his fame is international. Yet, there is an undercurrent of all that is typically Bengali in his themes. What my countrymen and the youth of the rest of my countrymen find in Tagore's poetry is impossible to describe. Think what the skies would look without the sun or the garden without its flowers. It would have been bleak and arid without this comforting oasis.

It is in the Poet's wonderful writings that we come into touch with the more permanent values of life, such as Death, Love and all which, whether of Nature or of Art, breathes the sublime essence of Truth and Humanity. The supreme and infallible test of our love and devotion for Tagore lies in the fact that we delight in imitating his handwriting ; we freely steal from his works ; we try eagerly to borrow his manner of speech,—in fact, we have an uncontrollable desire to feel, suffer, laugh, weep, love and hate like this unique and super-sensitive soul, for we assuredly do these from the synthesis of Bengali life and culture.

Rabindranath shall not die, for the monument of his glory is—

"...More lasting far
than bronze, and loftier than the royal
Of Pyramids."

The Poet's Republic

A Typical Tagore Letter



"PLATO threatened to banish all poets from his Republic. Was it in pity or in anger, I wonder? Will our Indian Swaraj, when it comes to exist, pass a deportation order against all poetical creatures who are pursuers of phantoms and fashioners of dreams, who neither dig nor sow, bake nor sell, spin nor darn, neither move nor support resolutions?

"I have often tried to imagine the armed hordes of poets establishing their own Republic in the near neighbourhood of that of Plato. Naturally, in an act of reprisal, His Excellency the Poet President is sure to banish from the Rhymers' Republic all philosophers and politicians. Just think of the endless possibilities arising from truces and truces of these rival Republics—peace conferences, deputations of representatives, institutions of busy secretaries and permanent funds having for their object the bridging of the gulf between the two adversaries. Then think of the trivial accident, through which a hopeless young man and a melancholy maiden, coming from the opposite territories, meet at the frontier, and owing to the influence of the conjunction of their respective objects fall in love with each other.

"There is no harm in supposing that the young man is the son of the President of the Philosophers' Republic, while the maiden is the daughter of that of the Poet's. The immediate consequence is the secret smuggling of forbidden love-lyrics by the desperate youth into the very heart

of the commentaries and controversies of the two contradictory schools of the Philosophy—the one professed by the yellow-turbaned sages, proclaiming that *one* is truth and *two* is an illusion, and the other, which is the doctrine of the green-turbaned sages asserting that *two* is truth and one is an illusion.

"Then came the day of the great meeting, presided over by the Philosopher President, when the pandits of the two factions met to fight their dialectic duels finally to decide the truth. The din of debates grew into a tumultuous hubbub; the supporters of both parties threatened violence and the throne of truth was usurped by shouts. When these shouts were about to be transmuted into blows, there appeared in the arena the pair of lovers who, on the night of the full moon of April, were secretly wedded, though such inter-marriage was against the law. When they stood in the open partition between the two parties, a sudden hush fell upon the assembly.

"How this unexpected and yet ever-to-be-expected event, mixed with texts liberally quoted from the proscribed love-lyrics, ultimately helped to reconcile the hopeless contradiction in logic is a long story. It is well known to those who have had the privilege to pursue the subsequent verdict of the judges that both doctrines are held to be undoubtedly true; that *one* is in *two*, and therefore *two* must find itself in *one*. The acknowledgment of this principle helped to make the inter-

marriage valid, and since then the two Republics have successfully carried out their disarmament, having discovered for the first time that the gulf between them was imaginary.

"Such a simple and happy ending of this drama has caused wide-spread unemployment and consequent feeling of disgust among the vast number of secretaries and missionaries belonging to the institutions maintained with the help of permanent funds, for the preaching of Union—those organizations which were so enormously perfect in their machinery that they could well afford to ignore the insignificant fact of their barrenness of result. A large number of these individuals gifted with an ineradicable passion for doing good are joining the opposite organizations, which have their permanent funds in order to help them to prove and to preach that two is two and never the twain shall meet.

"That the above story is a true one will, I am sure, be borne out by the testimony of even the august shade of Plato himself. This episode of the game of hide-and-seek of one in two should be sung by some poet; and therefore I request you to give it, with my blessing to Satyendranath Dutta (the famous Bengali poet, greatly loved and admired by Rabindranath Tagore) that he may set it in those inimitable verse forms of which he is a master, and make it ring with the music of his happy laughter."

(From a Letter to a Friend
by Rabindranath Tagore)



Rabindranath

DR. SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

THIS is the Birth Centenary year of Poet Tagore. He would have reached hundred if alive. Every one expects that a man should live upto hundred years. This is a general desire. It would have been the good fortune of a nation if a man like Tagore would have lived so long, maintaining a sound physique and an alert mind. We who had the opportunity to come into his close contact will cherish the sacred memory. The Poet did not survive to see his country free from the foreign-yoke. If he was present to-day with us probably the present condition of the country would have pained him, but we would have been benefitted by his liberal outlook and valuable guidance in our national life.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan during the last Birth Anniversary of the Poet, celebrated during his life time, said that, "he is still with us shows that God has not yet forsaken us." We can now realise the import of his utterances in letter and spirit.

While writing on Tagore three major issues come to my mind :

(1) What has he done for his own nation and what he has left to us ?

(2) What has he done for the people belonging to his own language-group ?—and

(3) Why are we personally indebted to him ?

The last-named item can only be discussed from the view-point of personal experiences. Regarding the other two greater and exhaustive issues, our judgment should be more realistic and need not be self-centred. First of all let us find out what legacy Tagore had left for his countrymen as a whole and from that alone we shall be able to form an idea as to why people belonging to all over India should be indebted to him.

There remains another aspect. Apart from our personal, provincial and national interest or even leaving apart the question regarding the relation Tagore had with Life, we shall have to consider his relation with the Humanity as a whole. For this we shall have to depend on the

people who belong to the countries outside India. They will not accept any amount of briefing from us. By visiting foreign countries outside India or in discussions with foreigners from reading their views on Tagore we realise the esteem and reverence with which they treasure the memory of Tagore.

The famous American Writer and Philosopher, Will Durant while presenting one of his books to Tagore recorded his compliments in the following terms : "*You are the reason why India should be free.*"

We can easily realise from this simile as to how Tagore enhanced our prestige in the eyes of others. In Sanskrit there is a saying that if a son is good, his family becomes proud and the mother is praised. The correctness of this saying is rightly realised from such incidents.

About 38 years ago, while I was a student in Paris, a colleague of mine from Maharashtra, observing the increasing popularity of Tagore in Europe, remarked that, Rabindranath was the greatest Ambassador who could be sent out of any country to foreign lands. Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize ten years before that, and my colleague was right. The dignity and respect with which all Indians were treated by educated foreigners for the advent of Tagore was not in any way lesser in degree than the treatment which people belonging to independent countries usually receive from them. This I mention from my personal experience. It is not alone respect, but also the cordiality and friendliness which we received from the foreigners was due to the great personality of Tagore and his universalism. I can say that even people belonging to Big Powers like U.K. or U.S.A. do not always receive such treatment. I have narrated many such experiences elsewhere ; I need not repeat them now.

For such reasons alone, the modern Indians, especially Indians who were under the British



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Rule, shall remain grateful to Tagore. Tagore did not charm outside people by anything sensational or thrilling and there lies his greatness. His universalism and humanism made him an object of pride for India. He conquered the heart of foreigners belonging to different nationalities by his charming personality and pleasing manners.

Let me narrate here a small incident. This happened in the presence of my friend, Dr. Kalidas Nag. At one occasion when Tagore was staying in Paris, Dr. Nag was with him. One day Tagore was scheduled to visit a distant place for delivering a lecture. A taxi was waiting at the hotel door and Tagore was climbing down from the stairs accompanied by others. The solemn appearance of Tagore used to inspire respect and reverence. This also attracted the attention of the taxi driver. When Dr. Nag opened the door of the taxi, the Driver whispered to enquire the identity of the great personage. Dr. Nag informed him that he was the Great Indian Poet, Rabindranath Tagore. Immediately, the cabman took his hat off in reverence and opened the door. When the taxi reached its destination and the people who were waiting for Tagore took him inside, Dr. Nag came forward to examine the meter when to his surprise the cabman suddenly turned the meter out, saying : "I cannot accept the hire charges. Please excuse me. I have read some of his works."

Dr. Nag felt amused and enquired the names of the books which he had read and appreciated.

He replied, "I have read all his books which had been translated into French but I liked *Sadhana* very much."

With these he drove on.

I do not mean to say that every taxi driver or most of them in Paris read Tagore. But this proves the manner in which the message of Tagore has reached every corner and even to a commonman. They remember him with great reverence for whatever little they have received from him. Even this respect and reverence for him amounts to pure love in some cases. The Poet himself desired to have only this love for him. I can say that there was no political significance, whatsoever, at the bottom of this show

of respect and endearment to Tagore or to his countrymen. There was only one thing and that was his deep humanism and universalism which crossed the barrier of nationalism or petty partisanism and dirty selfishness. This is how Tagore conquered the heart of Universe. He loved men and the love which was manifest in him was not to be found anywhere. Some one has said on Rabindranath that he had the "most stupendous mind of modern times". This is correct but with this another line must be added, he was one of the greatest lovers of men and in that class his name should be placed at the top. He was in one word an image of Humanism.

A devotee of Tagore from Finland has written a Sanskrit Poem which means : "East shall never meet the West ; but the Sun which rises in the East illuminates the West also. The Sun is far-reaching, sunbeams reach both South and North and for that reason, Oh Rabindra ! You should specially be worshipped in our country in the North."

Similar expressions have been given by people from Indonesia, Lebanon and many other places. Someone has somewhere said "He alone is truly International who is most intensely National." This is a very correct expression indeed ! As Shakespeare is the National Poet of England, Tagore is the National Poet of the Universe. Common men in Europe and America cannot correctly realise the import and creed of non-violence and non-cooperation of Mahatma Gandhi. Even talented people also fail to make a correct estimate. They believe that he only embarrassed the British people. They had some faint idea about Mahatmaji which was somewhat linked with the attitude they had about the Indian *Yogis* and *Fakirs*. It may be mentioned here that there were quite a few intellectuals who could appreciate the importance of the message of non-violence of Mahatmaji. But Tagore was different. People took him as a Poet of their own and believed that the tune of their personal sorrows and pleasures, love and anguish echoed in his poem.

"One touch of Nature maketh the whole world keen." This touch of Nature in Tagore

helped him to make the people of the entire world his kinsmen.

Dr. Johnson has written in praise of the English Poet Goldsmith—"He touched nothing which he did not adorn". This is applicable to Tagore also.

Not only literature, there were many other aspects in his life. It has been said on Sophocles that "He saw life steadily and saw it wholly." This fits in Tagore also. He was not a mere detached spectator of the drama of life, he had the zest of life in him. He was a believer in Life force and he never hesitated to take his full share in the hazards of Life. He had extra literary attachments in all branches of fine arts, like

Music, Drama, Art and Architecture. He had intimate role in our national life also, and in the current history of India many pages will have to be devoted to him.

Multifacedness is one of the signs of a great life. I have a place in my heart where he is standing alone face to face with me and where there is no room for any one else. When it comes to something personal, it is better to remain silent. I, therefore, conclude my tribute with this remark—"The highest tribute is the tribute of Silence."

(Translated from the original in Bengali)

—*Rabindranath Tagore to the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a cablegram from Kalimpong, India—June—1940.*

To-day we stand in awe before the fearfully destructive force that has so suddenly swept the world. Every moment I deplore the smallness of our means and feebleness of our voice in India so utterly inadequate to stem in the least the idea of evil that has menaced the permanence of civilization. All our individual political problems to-day have merged into one supreme world of politics which I believe is seeking help in the United States as the last refuge of spiritual man and these few lines of mine merely carry my hope, even if unnecessary that she will not fail in her mission to stand against this universal disaster that appears so imminent.

—TAGORE

Rabindranath Tagore

India's Message to the Modern World

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TAGORE was a giant of the mind ; his stature stands out at the crossroads of two ages, traditional and modern, and of two cultural worlds, East and West, surveying both by virtue of his eminence as well as his globe-encircling travels. The favourable circumstances of Tagore's personal and cultural back-ground enhance rather than diminish his greatness, and today, at the doorstep of the atomic age, both East and West still have much to learn from him.

This poet-philosopher was the heir of an extraordinary, brilliant legacy. His father, Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905), was a thinker and scholar of great distinction, a leading personality in the Brahmo Samaj (Society of God) that played so important a role in the renaissance of Hinduism in the nineteenth century and was in turn stirred by the impact of Western ways and Christian beliefs on Indian Society. The net result of the historical blending of Western and Eastern thought was a grand synthesis, creative, beneficent, and surpassing the obvious limitations of Eastern as well as Western patterns of life and faith. In their serious efforts to combine the best features of the Christian and their own religion, the devout men within the Brahmo Samaj rediscovered the deepest sources of their own tradition as well as cleansed it of the accumulated dust of the ages ; their plea was for reforming Hinduism of its social aberrations. Under the inspiration of Tagore's father Hindu monotheism was revived and many of Bengal's best educated young men gathered to worship, in a unique blend of Upanishadic and Christian inspiration, the one and only true God, Wrote the elder Tagore :

My endeavour was to obtain God not through blind faith but by the light of knowledge. With the knowledge of the outer world we come to know our inner self....the more I thought the more did I recognize the sway of wisdom operating throughout the whole world....the sun and moon rise....the wind and rain are set in motion in the proper seasonsthe child, as soon as born, drinks at its mother's

breast. Who taught it to do this ? He alone, who gave it life....It cannot be the design of matter ; it must be the design of mind. Therefore, this universe is propelled by the power of an intelligent being.

During his lifetime and even more so after his death, Devendranath, by all standards an eminent father, had one of his strongest supporters in the person of his world-famous son, Rabindranath.

Although Rabindranath Tagore was an original thinker, as a poet of life and love he was an intellectual descendant of the tenderly sensitive Vaishnava poets, who in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave Indian literature philosophical depth as well as subtle colour. Back of it all stood, then as now, the monumental wisdom of the ancient originators of the *Upanishads*, those philosophical-religious meditations appended as commentaries to the sacred text of the *Vedas* (Books of Wisdom probably towards the seventh century B.C).

It is the philosophy of the *Upanishads* which is reflected in Tagore's religious poems and profound meditative essays such as those collected under the title of *Sadhana* (Worship in Meditation). The *Sadhana* collection, composed of selected discourses originally presented to Tagore's own students in his school at Bolpur, Bengal, has as its basic theme the manifest unity and oneness of the whole universe which underlies the apparent but illusory diversity of all natural phenomena. Man's place in this universe is not in doubt. Hemmed in by the inescapable limits of birth and death, man's reverential duty is the realization of his life by love and right action. Through love and the austere discipline of his will man must learn to interflow with the world and be a humble and un-hankering part of it. In this, says Tagore, lie peace and real happiness.

There is no better introduction to the *Upanishads* for Westerners than the works of

Tagore. Tagore stands firmly on the ground of spiritual monism developed in the *Upanishads*, a monism which teaches that the essence of our soul is identical with the very essence of the universe. In other words, he is convinced with William Blake that "man has no body distinct from his soul and that this world is not only made by God but is made *of* God as well." Therefore, there can be no real separateness God. Nature, the outer world, *is* God and with the knowledge of the outer world we come to know our inner self. Our aim must be to enlarge our consciousness by growing with and growing into our surroundings.

The only way of attaining truth is through the interpenetration of our being with all objects. To realize this great existing harmony between man's spirit and the spirit of the world is the basis of Tagore's teachings. It was the very same endeavour which inspired the forest-dwelling sages of ancient India three thousand years ago. From then to now it was India's point of view that we are, in spite of ourselves, in harmony with nature; that man can "think" because his thoughts are in harmony with "things"; that he can use the forces of nature for his own purpose only because his power and intellect are in harmony with the all-power and intellect which is universal and that therefore, in the long run, man's purpose never can knock against the purpose which works through nature.

Participation in the aliveness of nature as urged by Tagore is also the key to personal self-realization. Positively expressed, true self-fulfilment is the discovery of our God-willed innermost nature, our true *raison d'être*, our *dharma*.

Sinfulness, on the other hand, is the violation of our *dharma*, of our inner law. Yet in the search for our true self we easily fall victim to illusion.

To take advantage of all opportunities for self-gratification and self-aggrandizement is not self-fulfilment, nor is it freedom; for history demonstrates that those who indulged in licentious self-gratification and self-adoration lost their freedom. Truly great men have always been those who have lived the life of self-sacrifice and of social service. The lamp must give up its oil to the light and thus realize the purpose it had

in accumulation, in hoarding. This voluntary giving up of ourselves is emancipation; it is the true freedom which the Rishis taught, and Buddha taught, and Christ.

In this Vedantic-Buddhist-Christian sense, the extinction of selfishness rather than the pretentious inflation of the ego is the road to freedom. Seen positively, the extinction of selfishness is the function of *love*, which wishes for the social good and thus realizes the *higher* self. The state of *Nirvana* that Buddha preached, the attainment of the Kingdom of God that Christ preached, is through love and through love only. For love transcends the limits of the present and of the personal. It is on the side of the infinite. Everything else, writes Tagore in *Sadhana*, raises the question "why." But when we say "I love" then there is no room for the "why"; it is the final answer in itself. Liberation is possible only through love. Only that which is done with love is done freely. Love is the positive form of freedom. Its opposite is compulsion and licence.

As a middle-aged man, Tagore became convinced that education of the sort he proposed—education of individuals conscious of their moral and social responsibility—was the only sure remedy for the social ills of his time, not only in India but in the world at large. This conviction became so strong that he decided to retire from political activities to dedicate himself entirely to his school and literary work. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he insisted that he was a spiritual leader, not a politician. In fact, Tagore could have said of himself what Gandhi so aptly said of his own way of looking at politics: "If I seem to take part in politics it is only because politics today encircle us like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out no matter how one tries. I wish to wrestle with the snake. . . . I am trying to introduce *religion* into politics."

Here again, Tagore was in the best Indian tradition, a tradition inspired by India's ancient sages and practised in our age by Gandhi and Nehru. It is an insistence that social and political relations must conform to the standards of ethics and humane decency.

On the estate he had inherited from his

father, Tagore proved himself a true friend of the Indian peasants whose simplicity of spirit and devotional idealism he dearly loved. He looked after the material needs of his farmhands, and, as he said of himself, administered "justice tempered with mercy." To help them in sickness, he privately took up the study of homoeopathy and at any hour of the day or night would visit the sick and give medicine. Amidst the joys and sorrows of his peasants, Tagore so re-organized the estate and so influenced his staff with a healthy moral tone that corruption soon became a thing of the past.

Throughout his mature life Tagore was a staunch advocate of a society formed and maintained to ameliorate the condition of men. But, though he always raised his voice for the unfortunate and poor, he would not have supported a welfare state fostering a "let George do it" attitude. Tagore always believed in what he proudly described as India's "early ideal of strenuous self-realization." He had little regard for the gaudily attired snob, but much preferred "a labourer toiling in the sun and rain, who has to submit a clear account of his work and has no breathing space to enjoy himself in playful frolic." Man's freedom, he said, is *never* in being *saved* trouble but it is the freedom to *take* trouble for the common good, which alone makes freedom meaningful and enjoyable. True, there is much evil in the world, and no life is lived without plenty of troubles and pains; but these scourges, as Tagore views them, are divine signboards to our perfection, lashes which arouse the inert. We should look upon pain as only the other side of joy, as a pointer to a better future. Lecturing in London "On the Problem of Evil," he once called pain "our true wealth as imperfect beings."

Tagore's "socialism," if the label fits at all, is not of the doctrinaire kind, but is permeated with profound moral idealism sharply contrasting with the self-righteous materialist version of modern socialism. While Lenin proclaimed, "We repudiate all morality that is outside class conceptions," Tagore pleaded for a socialism with moral fibre, one corroborated by the religious teachings of the sages of all races, one reflected by the warm wisdom of a sympathetic human heart :

I do not exactly know whether the socialist's

demand... is possible or not. (But to ridicule as) a dream the possibility of distributing the bare necessities of life amongst mankind (and to think) that some men are predestined to starve without any way out of it is a cruel theory to say the least.

As to the methods to abolish poverty and promote social equality *within* a nation, Tagore's ideas would hardly have differed from those Jawaharlal Nehru expressed in masterly fashion in a famous speech some years ago :

Socialism cannot be established through legislative measures, nor can you do it by applying a ceiling on income or merely by nationalization of industries. For the establishment of socialism or a welfare state, it is essential to produce the goods in abundance which will make socialism or the welfare of the people possible. Equality of poverty is certainly not socialism. Nor would it be advisable to distribute poverty.

Tagore seldom lost an opportunity to use his brilliant pen for criticizing pseudo-rationalism and materialism. He pointed a warning finger to the many variations of this deceitful philosophy and to the dire practical consequences of its applications in the modern world, such as the depreciation of the individual, the increased use of force, the justification of ruthless power over the masses and the overemphasis on technical means at the expense of basic human values. Tagore never tired of explaining that "harmony can never be reached by compulsion"; that without freedom no valuable creative efforts are possible; and that power is always tempted to suppress free inquiry and criticism. In one age or culture it is the power of the church; in another it is the power of the state; in still another it is the power of organized wealth.

Imbued with the spirit of India's ageless books of wisdom, Tagore held that only the inner-directed man can be fully human, conscious of his social responsibilities, truly free and happy. Only the inner-directed, divinely inspired man has dignity and respects that of others. Only such an individual can form the fundamental building stone of a genuinely free society. By contrast, the outer-directed robot and organization man, pressed and atomized in the mould of some kind of organization collective, is the man who first is robbed of his personal identity, next becomes the man in a herd, soon the man of a mob, and is ultimately destined to be the dust on the boots of the mighty in a sub-human robot and ant-heap society.

By making the concept of the common good the supreme value for both the individual and society, Tagore determined the proper relations between the two and made it clear that individualism and collectivism can be equally inhuman, the former because it may ignore or exploit one's fellow man, the latter because it crushes by making collectivity absolute.

Tagore's principle of the common good leads naturally to an organic structure of state and society. In that structure every individual or group or political division finds its own proper place, its own specific tasks, and its own free sphere of action in an expanding network of cooperative mutuality. In this scheme of things the individual has morally and legally recognized the principle that he is not an end in himself, but that for the sake of his own self-realization he must serve the common good in the social order. The community, on the other hand, is obligated to respect the divinely set purpose of the individual in a sacred promise of giving him bodily protection and guaranteeing his rightful freedoms including that of inquiry and criticism.

Needless to say, such mutuality between the individual and his society depends primarily and ultimately on the respect for law. Tagore was quite correct in emphasizing that law is "the first step towards freedom, in fact the other side of it." In other words, freedom and law are inseparable companions of a humane, a just, a truly good society.

In the moral framework suggested by Tagore not only the freedom of the individual is guaranteed, but also the healthy development of the social organs which link the nation and the individual, such as family, village, township, province, and state. In that pattern industrial and occupational groupings can freely function and in it there can be no disruptive dispute either as to the rightful place of private enterprise or of public controls. On every level of society and in every legitimate activity individuals are being protected from being uprooted and from falling under the merciless clutch of an overpowering collectivity including the most dangerous one of all, the omnipotent state. Two vital principles of social organization are implied here: First, it should be out of order for an upper-level social organ

(the national government, for example), to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed more properly and efficiently by a basic-level organization (a municipality or private group, for instance). Second, and conversely, no lower level of social organization should have the right to decide problems which by their very nature cannot be adequately solved except by an upper-level, wider-circle community.

Tagore taught his readers and disciples that above all nations stands *humanity*. He believed in the unity of the human race, a unity enlivened and enriched by natural diversity. He felt that cooperation and cross-fertilization of mankind's diverse elements—racial, cultural, religious—is absolutely essential for the wholesome and complete development of our kind. "As the mission of the rose," he wrote, "lies in the unfolding of the petals which implies distinctness, so the rose of humanity is perfect only when the diverse races and nations have developed their distinct characteristics to perfection; yet all remain attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of brotherhood." That is why Tagore believed that East and West have their special lives to live, and their special missions to fulfil, but that their final goal is the same. This theme was the dominant note in his address at a great banquet in London, where the great minds of England and Ireland gathered to welcome him. On that occasion he said:

I have learned that, though our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one. The monsoon clouds, generated on the banks of the Nile, fertilize the far-distant shores of the Ganges; ideas may have to cross from East to Western shores to find a welcome in men's hearts and fulfil their promise. East is East and West is West—God forbid that it should be otherwise—but the twain must meet in amity, peace, and mutual understanding; their meeting will be all the more fruitful because of their differences; it must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of humanity.

The towering greatness of Rabindranath Tagore may be measured by the fact that he did not see irreconcilable opposites where less understanding mortals saw only incompatibles. Tagore was able to reconcile individualism and socialism, and he was equally capable of making nationalism and internationalism appear not only

compatible but mutually indispensable to each other. This is no denial that Tagore was a nationalist. A great patriot, he dedicated a large portion of his work exclusively to India, to the cause of its independence and progress. Yet Tagore never indulged in the chauvinism which historically characterizes totalitarian states and is a frequent cause of national self-destruction. On the contrary, Tagore courageously attacked the "false" nationalist, who, he says, always looks suspiciously outside and in the process forgets to take cognizance of the internal causes which give rise to social and political disease. "If the inside is not healthy," Tagore explained, "it will breed disease no matter how pure the outside may be. . . . But I agree with you when you want to rely on yourself for reforms, both internal and external."

It is rare indeed to find any suggestions of anger or hatred for anybody in the world in Tagore's patriotic poems, which radiate love, encouragement, and humility. "Let the promises and hopes, the deeds and words of my country be true, my God," reads one of his verses. "Keep watch, India," he sings in another, "Come with thy treasure of contentment, the sword of fortitude and meekness crowning thy forehead." In the concluding sentences of his splendid essay on "The Situation and the Description," he writes passionately: "I will never accept that we have no hope but in the begging bowl. I have faith in my country. I respect self-help."

Looking forward to the day when India would be free, Tagore spoke out in words of flame against Western imperialism. Had Communist imperialism existed in his time he would have

condemned it too. Tagore did not quarrel with anybody in particular; his argument was with predatory power as a *general* evil, as a cancer of the human soul, a dangerous social disease which ultimately brings death to the afflicted exploiters themselves.

To his last breath Tagore retained supreme faith that social harmony and world peace would finally be reached by the path of cultural conciliation between the Orient and the Occident and that the realization of the fundamental unity of the human race would thus be consummated.

He believed that mankind could save itself from destruction only by a return to the spiritual values which are basic to all religions and that to India, home of both Hinduism and Buddhism, belonged the mission to lead this religious revival which would reawaken Asia and the West and, in the same process, reform India itself.

Although this message, like that of Swami Vivekananda, singled out India as spiritual teacher to the world, Tagore never ceased reminding his countrymen that they had much to learn from the West's down-to-earthness, vitality, and dedicated search for truth.

By elucidating ideas of life different from those of the West, Tagore has presented the West with a challenge to its ways and aspirations. At the same time, he has reminded the West of its own deepest sources of inspiration. The best men in India and the West have always been fighters in a common cause for the same ageless ideals—ideals modern men need to revive to lift a new and better world out of the ashes of the old, a world, to use Tagore's words,

"Where the Mind is without Fear."

The history of the growth of freedom is the history of the perfection of human relationship.

—*Religion of Man.*



The Poet Who Defied Death

NARENDRA DEV

TAGORE was an ardent lover of nature. Its abounding beauty and splendour struck him so deeply that he wanted to enjoy them forever. He wrote : "In this beautiful world I do not want to die." In nature he saw a manifestation of the unseen Creator who is a master artist and invests everything with beauty and charm while unfolding Himself. This vision filled the poet's heart with an ecstasy of joy and worship. He composed many poems and songs that ring with the highest glory of the Creator. His clear perception imparted to them a vividness which reflects divine brilliance. They are so vivid that on reading them we both enjoy and comprehend the beauty of nature.

The rhythmic elegance and lovely grace of nature always found response in the poet. He could not keep his flood of joy shut. He opened the sluice gate of his heart wide, from which flowed a stream of rhythmic beauty which raises a corresponding vibration in every soul. His readers share his joy and appreciate with him nature's grandeur and grace.

The ever-changing panoramic show displayed in the clouds has been here since the earth was born. But who cared to look at it ? It is the poets whose eyes first caught sight of this beauty. They gazed on and on, fascinated by its charm, and then made an attempt to bring it to our notice by singing its praise. Adikavi Valmiki, the author of the immortal epic *Ramayana* and the first poet of our land, and Mahakavi Kalidasa, King Vikramaditya's court-poet, were pioneers in describing nature's variegated beauty as seen in the seasons. But they wrote in Sanskrit which we have long discontinued to read. And consequently, we are deprived of that subtle sense of beauty which they infuse into their readers.

It is Rabindranath who has revived in us, through his incomparably magnificent and wonderfully sublime poems, fine feeling and an interest in nature. His innumerable composi-

tions on nature have reawakened our lost sensibility. We have regained perception without which we are blind to the beauty of both nature and man. Tagore's intuition was so powerful and observation so keen that he succeeded in depicting even the tenderest and most delicate aspect of nature and man. They were to him the divine symbols through which the Creator, the all-pervading Beautiful, expresses Himself.

Like one of the venerable Rishis of old, when several dumb centuries had gone by in our fine arts and literature, Tagore stood before us and revealed to us the long-forgotten beauty of nature. In many of his musical overtures on seasons he painted nature in all its naked splendour. He also harmonised man's inner self with the soul of nature and, in hundreds of his sublime poems, proved that man and nature are really one and the same. He imbibed all that is beautiful in this universe. In an exquisite language he expressed the emotional joy which he felt through keen appreciation of the beautiful. He looked upon nature and man from the worshipper of beauty's point of view. In hazy, cold and severe winter mornings he felt in his limbs the pleasant warmth of the soft sun. The wet clouds on the monsoon sky conjured up in a flash the two heavy blue eyes of a beautiful damsel. The foaming springs rushing out of the hills seemed to him to be like young school girls who trip blithely and whose loose braids swing right and left rhythmically to the closing bells. These animated pictures drawn from nature vibrate in our mind when the poet addresses the earth : "*Oh dear earth ! Your wonderful body is dyed all over with the pleasant and happy colour of thousand and one creatures' joy and pleasure.*"

It is this realisation of the earth's beauty that made him sing : "*In this beautiful world I do not want to die.*" And what was his next

thought? The poet's sonorous voice vibrates in our ears: "*I wish to live in the midst of mankind.*"

To view the clouds at childlike play, he says: "O, dear earth! your wonderful body is dyed all all over with the pleasant and happy colour of thousand and one creatures' joy and pleasure." It is this realisation of the earth's beauty that made him sing: "In this beautiful world I do not want to die." And what was his next thought? The poet's sonorous voice vibrates in our ears: "*I wish to live in the midst of mankind.*"

The poet has explained in his autobiography how this desire crossed his mind. He has confessed that "nature with all its beauty, savour, hue and fragrance and man with his handsome appearance, rich intelligence, wonderful quality of the heart, tender affection and deep sincere love which can make any sacrifice, charmed" him overwhelmingly. He was inspired. An ardent adorer of nature and a keen admirer of man he composed innumerable odes, hymns and elegies and sung thousands of songs in praise of them. In an early book of poems *The Evening Songs* he wrote:

It is a pleasure to hear the birds sing,
It is a pleasure to hear the murmur of spring,
It is a pleasure to look at bowers,
And enjoy the spring-fare of blooming
flowers,
It is a pleasure throughout the day
To view the clouds at childly play.

These notes, attuned to nature, man and the universe, resound in all his later works. In *Pictures and Songs (Chhabi O Gan)*, for example, the human heart takes part in nature's play and becomes one with it. In *Paintings (Chitra)*, *Late Spring (Chaitali)* and *The Golden Boat (Sonar Tari)* also the oneness of man and nature is manifest. It is the golden wand of humanity the magical touch of which has animated all the inanimate objects of nature. The poet became bewildered, as he felt the presence of joyous life and beauty in everything around him; and in this fascinated state he chanted: "*In this beautiful world I do not want to die, I wish to live in the midst of mankind.*" (*Life: Pran, Kari O Komal*).

Nature has a dark side also, which is not only terrible but severely cruel and destructive. In his eagerness to study nature the Poet came face to face with this grim and tragic side. He was greatly moved by its horrors and frightfulness; yet he praised nature with no less emotion.

In *The Woman of the Soul (Manasi)* we come across a mysterious being who rules the poet's heart and becomes his soul-mate. She occupies a central position in a great many of his poems. In his later volumes, however, high philosophical thought has come to the fore, which has won him the name of a seer. In more than one poem, the poet's imagination indulges in the seer's visions:

As far as one's eyes could reach,
The dazzling crests of the vast
green cornfield
Carry the flow of life from the heart of
earth, each
Into the inner chamber of my soul,
where it remains for ever sealed.

When he found that this immensely beautiful life that throbs within us is nothing but a gift from evergreen nature which pervades the whole universe, the poet sang gratefully:

In this profound, serene calm of nature
My life, as if, I always lose!
All the dirty streams that carry the flames
of sin
Dissolve in life's ocean of muse!

In one of his famous poems *The Earth (Basundhara)* the poet wrote:

To appease my desire I wish again and again
To drink from all the cups of this universe
The wine of joy in fresh streams and
showers.

The "Viswakavi" in him can be traced back to this period of his life. We find him entreating the mother Earth in a most passionate voice:

Take me back, oh, there,
To the midst of all, where every day and hour
Buds and blossoms and flowers forth life
In hundreds, thousands forms.

It is his deep love for the earth that led him to write both *Fancies (Kalpana)* and *Tales and Dialogues (Katha O Kahini)*, which are apparently unconnected. The former deals with

diverse subjects, while in the later many forgotten pages of our glorious history relieve.

Many of the poet's experiences of life have found expression in the little volume entitled *Particles* (*Kanika*). These beautiful short poems may be described as tiny seeds of a giant fruit. In *Offerings* (*Nairadya*) we come across patriotism in addition to love for God. The poet had gradually turned to God to whom all his offerings would now be directed. The beauty, savour, fragrance, tender touch and melodious music of nature, which had once bewitched him, now gave rise to a transcendental perception of God, his unflinching devotion to whom produced

the immortal volume of *Song-Offerings* (*Gita-jali*) which won him not only the Nobel Prize, but world-wide fame also. In *Garland of Songs* (*Gitimalya*) and *Songs* (*Gltali*), which followed *Song-Offerings*, he still soars high in the sublime role of a singer who looks upon God as his beloved.

Though *The Extreme End* (*Parishesha*) and *The Last of the Seven Keys* (*Shesha Saptaka*) and a few other poems, written during and after his last severe illness, strike a farewell note, we find in them the tender and delicate expression of his love and deep admiration for beauty and truth.

A TRIBUTE

GURUDEVA, REVERED MASTER,

If we may call you by this name so dear to your pupils, who express through it their consciousness that you are not only a poet and a teacher, but one of the voices of divinity itself, we thank you for coming to us, across so many dreary seas, to help to break down the barriers between the East and the West, so that, while India takes from us those inventions which would destroy all poverty if they were well controlled, we may learn from her something of her tolerant wisdom and her spiritual peace.

We offer you, as you go from us, our admiration and our affection. We feel that we have been cleansed and ennobled by meeting you ; it gives us a new faith to see that a man may still live a life true to all the highest ideals of our youth. We were cynics before you came ; we thought that all ideals were false, and all hopes vain ; but one look at you and we know that we were wrong, that the battle between Right and Might is not yet lost, and that life may still have meaning for us that will not be frustrated by our deaths. Something of the ancient idealism of the East has been poured into our blood by the wine and music of your verse, by the example and majesty of your life.

WILL DURANT
American Philosopher & Author

The Glory of Nature

KESHAB CHANDRA GUPTA



"BEAUTY is nature's Coin" Said Milton's Comus in his wickedness, to seduce his female victim, Rabindranath trafficked in the Coins of nature in all her aspects. Nature seems dumb to us, although we detect her whisperings. But when a poet of the universe interprets them for us, we become alive to the glory—

Byron heard music in nature !

"There's music in the sighing of a reed,
There's music in the gushing of a rill
There's music in all things if men had ears
Then Earth is but an echo of the Sphere".

and the poet confessed.—

"I love not Man the less, but Nature more."

The love of nature in Rabindranath was tremendous. The glory of that love enhanced the glory of Man. For the human soul is divine.

In this consciousness lay the universality and cosmopolitanism of Rabindranath. His regard and respect for life was all-embracing. The plants and animals shared them.

His happiness was intense when his friend Jagadish Chandra recorded messages of plants. Admiration welled up in the poet's recorded messages of plants. Admiration welled up in the poet's heart. His compliments to the Scientist were profuse.

"The cry that issues from dumb life,
Shakes the heart of earth in strife,
To sprout from seeds ; keen branches sheet
Out of the restless rambling roots,
In struggle for light. Their mysteries
unfold

Writing to you in mystic letters bold."

"Truth is unity", he said, "and therefore Freedom is in realisation. The texts of our daily worship and meditation are for training the mind and overcome the barrier of separateness from the rest of existence and to realise "*advaitam*" the supreme unity and "*anantam*" infinitude."

That realisation instilled in him love for

every part of the vast creation. The creator is infinite in his seeming finite creation, and manifests Himself in a variety of colours and flavours, of music and rhymes. He is formless ; yet in the "*lila*" His sport of grace—He takes forms to awaken the human heart.

The poets of Bengal could not free themselves from the grasping grace of nature that clothed their motherland with such charming display of colours. Man is the highest truth, declared Chandidas. But could he escape from the tentacles of the natural beauty in his composition of sweet love-songs ?

Rabindranath admitted the influence of plants and trees, flowers and herbs, streams and rills, on his personality. He never paraded philosophy or ontology relegating beauty to oblivion ; for to him, Sundaram was a part of Anantam and Shivam. Beauty of nature was the starting point of spiritual realisation.

One of the reasons for the poet's intense love of Golden Bengal, was her natural beauty.

"Oh my golden Bengal, I love thee,
Thy sky and thy wind for ever play the
flute in my life.
In *Falgun* the fragrance of thy paddy
fields creates intoxication.

Oh mother, in *Agrahyan*, what sweet
smile have I seen in your loaded corn-fields ?"

Deodar, the Himalayan fir, never fails to impress even the most prosaic visitor. The tree shoots out of high hills bursting the brain pit of the Himalayas. Life-energy rushes out in the form of a flame. The mother-earth is a gift from the sun, a part of the great seat of flaming energy.

"Immersed in meditation was the snowy
mountain., you silently pierced the Brahma
randhra and

The intense flame of life effused as the
deodar".

He Explained.

"The slender tall *debdaru*—the mountain
holds it superior

To his own glory. The meditation that
lay in his heart emanated as truth outside.

He received a loan from above
And repaid it, transmitting upwards his
offerings, one day".

The poet saluted the whole world of trees.
His opening poem in the *Banabani*, the message
of the forest, is salutation to trees.

"You heard the call of the sun
in the blind womb of the earth ;
In the first awakening of life, you tree,
the primordial life
With your upraised head, uttered the
first hymn to light,
From the breast of rocks which knew no
rhymes".

In presenting the picture of *Pasapini*, the
peasant woman who carried vegetables to the
village market to hawk, the poet had a glimpse of
the secret of her absent-minded attitude, while
returning home, across fields and orchards, she
kept aside her empty basket and even the humble
purse and fell into a reverie.

In the quietude of silence she felt relieved.
The memory of the din and bustle of the village
market, the noise of bargaining and canvassing
seemed to vanish into thin air. The poet read
the reason of the calmness.

"Eternity whispered its message,
Every limb and life to assuage,

The staid yearning for renunciation."

The country trades women certainly had
pretensions to learning. She was not trained to
meditations. It was the influence of nature that
induced the attitude. She felt

"The rhythm that silence can ever raise
When the midday sun seems ablaze
And emptiness sighs so deep"

The reason the poet conceived. Every energy
in nature is attuned to an eternal impulse and
pulsates in unison, though apparently in frolic-
some freaks. Harmony reveals itself in silence.
Such a silence seized the inner life of the lady.
The memory of the items in her make-up automa-
tically revived itself. It was then that she felt
the call.

"From the earliest memory of creation,
Suddenly the primary vibration revived
in your blood stream

That is why the tree and the blades of
grass

Life recognised as its own

In the midday of autumn.
In the playhouse of earth
For ages and ages.

Poets in other lands have attributed vitality
to vegetation. But the descriptions are mere
figures of speech and metaphorical. Rabindra-
nath's claim of relationship with vegetation is
based on the metaphysical concepts of his country
which proclaimed the imminence of the primor-
dial energy of nature.

In a letter written from Vienna in 1925, the
poet gave a clue to his attachment to the life
energy of the vegetable world. Trees inspired
sages who had their hermitage in the bosom of
the forest. They were out to solve the problem
of life. Plants were living entities as they were
born and they grew and died. Rabindranath
found many a support from the verses in the
sacred texts.

"They found the eternal query from plant to
plant, '*kena prana prathama praitiyukta*' ?
Whence did life receive its first impulse of pro-
gressive motion ? That energy of Motion does
not want to stop. The fountain of beauty
began to flow day and night. What a variety
of lines, what a variety of poses, what a variety
of expressions and what a variety of sufferings
accompanied that energy ?"

The little straight talk of the flower to a
human beauty that the poet overheard, is instruc-
tive. Humanity started the journey of life un-
doubtedly with plants. But after the evolution
there exists a difference with a distinction.
The unity of nature is not equality of its com-
ponent parts. The flower longed to speak to the
woman. She got a chance. Amongst other
topics she raised the one about the differences.
Said the flower.

"At the dawn of creation ages past
Woke we up in light
To make friendship tight

In rhythmic bond our arms knit fast".
But with ages there appeared differences al-
though the main tune of melody was common.
The lower confessed.

Yes, my friend, I feel in heart

Beauty in me came for a halt—	world through love. Every female in the higher
In thee as love it bloomed.	strata of the animal world have an instinctive love
The evolution of the heart is the greatest	for the progeny. But the human mother is cer-
wonder of nature in the animal world. The	tainly unique. That perception made the sages
woman has got her distinct place in the human	of India address the source of life as Mother.

A LETTER FROM A FRIEND

BELOVED FRIEND,

. . . As our thoughts dwell lovingly on your noble and wise work, we are lifted to a higher level of effort and devotion. To realize the meaning of your message of friendship and co-operation is to deepen the furrows from which shall spring richer harvests of inspiration.

In the sweet solitude of a Poet's life you heard a Voice bidding you look into the hearts of your fellow-men and seek the way to deliver them from the grotesque gods of their own creation. You stepped forth into the crowded abodes of men where strife is bitter, and ignorance is deep. Taking little children by the hand, you led them into gardens of delight and taught them to live in sympathy with all that is beautiful, and to love all that is love-worthy.

Again the voice bade you go from land to land in search of knowledge. With observing eye and listening ear you journeyed, and saw the course of division, the darkness of prejudice, the deafness of hate in which men live as strangers and enemies. But, looking long and patiently, you found the dynamic force of love hidden in humanity . . . the force which, understood, shall transform their life of self-destruction into a life of creative work and peace. To a world living under the law of fear you are Prophet of the Law of Love.

Your school at Visva-Bharati is a bright pledge of a noble civilization ; for it is a meeting-ground of the East and the West. There you teach in object-lessons of sympathy and goodwill that the true happiness of individuals and nations is identified with the highest good of mankind. When this supreme truth is grasped, the dream of all the greatest teachers spoken through the ages shall be fulfilled ; "Wars will be dead ; man will live, he will possess something greatest than all these . . . the whole of earth for his country and the whole of Heaven for his hope." . . .

With affectionate memories of our fleeting but precious few minutes together and the warmth of your hand in mine, I am,

Faithfully and gratefully yours,

HELEN KELLER

Rabindranath on Women

Dr. ROMA CHAUDHURI



IT HAS BEEN SAID sometimes, half humourously and half seriously, that the acid test for a philosopher or a reformer, is his views regarding women. For, although he claims to be a seer of a new vision, or a bringer of a new age, the real width of his coveted vision, or the inherent non-sectarianism of his dream of age can be determined, to a large extent, by his attitude towards women, his understanding of them, his rulings regarding them. Not a few celebrated men of the world have failed to come out unscathed from this difficult test, and shown themselves in such colours as would hardly do them credit from any universalistic standpoint, at all.

But, the case of Rabindranath, a great *Rishi* or a *Seer* of the Modern Age, is quite different. It is not for nothing that he has been universally acclaimed as a "*Visva-Kavi*", a World-Poet of the very first rank.

Now, who is a "World-Poet"? A World-Poet is one whose life is in tune with the Life of the world, whose mind reflects the Mind of the world, whose heart throbs with the Heart of the world. Accordingly, no section of human beings ; nay, no section of living beings ; nay, no section of worldly objects can escape his notice, or elude his sympathy, or frustrate his sense of justice and fair play.

Rabindranath, too, is a "World-Poet", in the most literal sense of the term, and not by exaggeration or flattery. So, his views on Women tally exactly with his general view of the world.

What is that view ? It is nothing but the age-old view of our ancient Sacred Texts, or Upanishads, manifested in a full-fledged form in the time-honoured Vedanta system of Philosophy, by common consent, the consummation of all the Indian Philosophical speculations throughout the ages. This Vedanta system teaches one, and only one, Truth viz., the Divinity of the so-called tiny, puny Man, the God-hood of the so-called gross, physical Universe. Thus, the Vedanta is an epitome of Equality, Unity, Justice.

For, if all human beings, all worldly objects be one and the same, being all Brahman himself, and nothing but Brahman, then, naturally, there can be no difference, at all, between one object and another.

Rabindranath, as a great inheritor of a great ancient heritage, was blessed with this beatific vision, this wide outlook, this inner sense of equity and justice, unity and universality, harmony and adjustment. Hence, he, too, as a great Seer, looks upon the entire universe as one and indivisible and all beings as absolutely equal. Thus, to him, there is no distinction between the sexes, at all. Of course, in the vast Rabindra-Literature—in his novels, short-stories, dramas, poems, songs and the like—we, naturally, meet with a variety of female characters—good and bad, high and low. But, still, the main refrain that sweetly and gloriously resounds through all these, is one of sound hope and good cheer, eternal beauty and purity, infinite majesty and sublimity.

Thus, in the Rabindra-Literature, Woman appears as an Emblem of Purest Love and Most Unselfish Service. It is She who sustains the whole family by the ambrosia of her heart, wards off all evils, wipes away all sins, wisps aside all errors, by the flame of her Life, rays of her Soul, light of her Being.

Hear the Poet's impassioned call to Women for succour and fulfilment :—

"Women ! the world thou did decorate,
Do, now, make my life ornate,
Fine and pure. Straws all dust,
Lazily neglected heaped up crust.
Wipe off blemishes, deep and dark
Throw out riff-raff, stinky and stark.
To my Temple, quiet and lonely,
Come in silence, open doors slowly,
Fill up jars, pure and holy
Pluck fresh lotuses, sweet and lovely.
Then, we two shall worship God
Sitting on the same seat, facing Lord".

("Smarana," Verse 18).

Thus, in this dense wilderness of life, woman can show a new way, all the thorns on the path will bloom forth under her comely feet, all the hard pebbles will melt away through her magic touch all the dust-heaps will sprinkle nectar at her every step.

But is the dark, cool, secure sanctuary of the home alone the proper place for Women? Although Rabindranath gladly and fully admits the equality of the sexes, yet he is as fully opposed to the over-Feminism of the West. In fact, he, echoing the age-old sentiments of India, unhesitatingly declares that, really speaking there is no question of the "*equality*" of sexes, as, in one sense, in a very real sense, in a very proper sense, women are infinitely "Mothers" higher than or superior to men. In what sense? In the sense of being "Mothers." The Indian view is not that the Father and the Mother are equal—the Indian view is rather, that the Mother is infinitely higher than or superior to the Father. So, even the great Law-giver Manu, often accused of being rather unsympathetic towards Women, declares proudly:—

"The Mother excels a thousand Fathers in Grandeur and Glory".

So, what question is there, of "equal" rights, when women's birth-right is to be fundamentally superior to men?

Rabindranath also in his infinite wisdom through his robust common-sense, fully realises the great Truth that "Freedom" is one thing, "Excess", another. So in his Bengali article in the book "*Samaj*," he comments caustically:—

"Although, it is rather impertinent on our part to say something for certain about a foreign Society, yet, so far as we can see from outside, the more the European Civilization is progressing, the more are Women there becoming unhappy.

"Women are, in fact, the centripetal force of Society. But centrifugal Force of Modern European Society has failed to maintain the *status quo*."

Really, European women seem to be in a sad predicament. They have lost their honoured places at home; but have unfortunately been unable to gain equally honoured places outside. So, what have they really gained through Over-

Feminism? Nothing, perceptibly; only empty prestige.

Succinctly, the Poet continues:—

"In Europe, the Regime of Women is about to vanish away totally. There, a damsel has to wait for a long time for a groom; the husband leaves the wife off for business; the son, as soon as grown-up, becomes a stranger to his mother. So, now it has become necessary for Women there to join the broil for existence. Still, their education, nature and social customs are standing in the way."

"So, in the present-day European Society, the position of women, has become rather anomalous. Men are not giving them their honoured places at home; nor are women given full rights to enter the sphere of outside activities."

What is the root of these troubles? Something seems to be wrong for the Modern European Society at large. What is that? Listen to the prophetic sayings of the Poet:—

"So, on the whole, we see that to European Civilization, 'Strength' has become such an essential commodity, that whether a man or a woman—on who is feeble seems to be losing one's place and refuge in Society, gradually. Now what is wanted is only Work, only Strength, only Motion. Those who can be merciful and those who deserve mercy; those who can love and those who deserve love, all these seem to be losing their rights now. Hence, it appears, that in the Modern European Society, women are rather ashamed of being women. They are trying their best to prove that they not only possess hearts, but also strength."

Of course, Rabindranath is not referring to the position of Women in European Society out of any spirit of spite or criticism. He means it to be an eye-opener to ultra-Modern misses who raise their eye-brows in wonder and curl up their lips in disgust at any and everything ancient. He also means it to be a reply to the hasty and unsympathetic critics of our own Society. Humourously he remarks:—

"Such is the state of things in the Modern European Society! But when, in the meantime, in England, gallons of tears are shed over the state of our Indian Women, we do feel sorry that so much is being wasted for nothing!"

"We, however, see, that our womenfolk, wearing bangles in their fine round wrists, besmearing their heads with vermillion, with ever-happy faces, fill our homes with affection, love, auspiciousness. In any case, we are quite happy with our womenfolk ; and we have not told that they themselves are unhappy. So, why should the hearts of persons, thousand miles away, be broken, all for nothing ?"

In this way Rabindranath very wisely warns the Women against any sort of over-doing in any respect—even in that of gaining their fundamental rights. Yet, he fully recognises the March of changing Time. In his inimitable way, he remarks in his Bengali article "*Nari*" in the book "*Kalantar*" :

"A Women's life is gradually widening itself up ; the banks are receding away more and more ; the brook is becoming a river, on and on."

What a beautiful illustration ! A 'river,' indeed, is a women, flowing in her own glory, in her own grandeur, in her own greatness, free and untrammelled ; yet not uncontrolled, not arbitrary, not menacing ; serving one and all, yet maintaining its flow and fullness, purity and perfection ; beauty and bliss intact. It, is this equi-

poise, this balance, this golden means between the extremes, this non-excited, calm outlook, this non-aggressive, confident strength—that constitutes the real key to Progress—Female or Male—in all places and in all ages. And Prophet Rabindranath, Philosopher Rabindranath, and above all, Poet Rabindranath, envisages this Great Truth, and expresses it in a manner, at once sweet and sound.

Let us end with that exhilarating message of Rabindranath to Modern Women :—

"Let them free their hearts ; brighten their intellect ; practise well the penance for attaining knowledge. The question of attaining "Success" will come later ; or may not even come over. But question of attaining "Capacity" comes always first."

"O Thou Women !

The Lord's own Companion,

Open thou up the Path to Recovery,

And make new the world, worn out and hoary."

(*Arogya*)

What a lovely tribute to Women ! Can, we, women, live up to it ?

[*Extracts from an article*

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Villages are like women. In their keeping is the cradle of the race. They are nearer to Nature than towns ; and are, therefore, in closer touch with the fountain of life. They have the atmosphere which possesses a natural power of healing. It is the function of the village, like that of woman, to provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy, with the simple poetry of life, and with those ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produce and in which she finds delight. But when constant strain is put upon her through the extortionate claim of ambition, when her resources are exploited through the excessive stimulus of temptation, then she becomes poor in life, her mind becomes dull and uncreative ; and from her time honoured position of the wedded partner of the city, she is degraded to that of maidservant. While, in its turn, the city, in its intense egotism and pride, remains unconscious of the devastation it constantly works upon the very source of its life and health and joy.

—TAGORE



রাশিয়ায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ - ১৯৩০

TAGORE IN RUSSIA - 1930



In America with the Members of the Cosmopolitan Club of the Illinois University, 1912

আমেরিকায় ইলিয়ন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে কসমোপলিটান ক্লাবের সদস্যবৃন্দ-সহ (১৯১২)

East and West in Tagore

Dr. KALIDAS NAG



RABINDRANATH saw the light of the day here in this cosmopolitan city of Calcutta (25th Baishak, 1368) and the Corporation of Calcutta has a special pleasure and privilege to perpetuate his memory in a worthy way. He was born amidst inauspicious happenings—disease, drought and famine (1861-66) when his father Maharshi Devendranath Tagore (1817-1905) and Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1883) organized social service work for the relief of suffering in Bengal and United Provinces. For differences with the more conservative Adi Brhmo Samaj (founded by Rammohan Roy in 1828) Keshub seceded and founded his Naba Bidhan or Bharat-barshiya Brahmo Samaj, which, in its turn, found seceder-groups who formed in 1878 the democratic Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.

Rabindranath in his adolescent age prematurely closed his school-career and sailed to join the London University College (1878-81) where he studied literature under the veteran Professor Henry Morley and also witnessed the best Shakespeare plays produced by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. Lady Macbeth haunted him—as we find from fragments of his Bengali version of the “Witch Scenes” of Macbeth. His elder brother Jyotirindranath (1848-1925) was his music-teacher who was also a painter-portraitist and actor-dramatist. He wrote and adopted many Indian and foreign plays for Bengali production and young Rabindranath scored as the best “boy-actor” in *Alik Baboo*. On his return from Europe (1881-91) before his second short visit to Europe (1890) Tagore produced, directed and played with great success (1) Balmikir Prativa and Rudra Chandral (1881) Kal-Mrigaya (1882) Bow Thakur-nair Hat (1883), dramatized (1908) as Prayashchitta, Nahmi Natya (1884), Bhanu Singha (1884), Rajarshi (1887) later dramatized as Bharjan (1890), Raja-o-Rani (1889) dramatized as Papati (1928).

These prove beyond doubt that Tagore was pre-eminently the Playwright Poet long before

the emergence of actor-dramatists like Girish Chandra Ghosh and Amritalal Basu. The last named veteran Amritalal Basu lived, to see and appreciate not only the plays but the superb acting of Rabindranath.

On his Birth Centenary new and creative ballets and operas were staged before huge gatherings in Soviet Russia, as I watched their preparations while contacting Russian artistes and attending the 25th International Congress of Orientalist in Moscow in August 1960.

But so far as his native city of Calcutta is concerned the only photo of Tagore, as Valmiki (1881), was snapped and reproduced by the ‘Statesman’ which worthily reproduced it in 1913. November, when Tagore won the first Nobel Prize in Asia. Few Indian papers could then find out a worthy photo of the Playwright-Actor-Poet appearing in so many roles (1881-1911).

Some very rare photos of Rabindranath, his family and entourage have been recovered oblivions by the Viswa-Bharati Publication Department. But a final attempt has yet to be made to trace other photos in the Albums of Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore (wife of the first Indian I.C.S.) and her talented daughter Indira Devi and cousin like Prativa Chaudhri; and their friends and relations. Alas we lost the House of Abindranath and Gaganendranath Tagore who inherited Prince Dwarkanath Tagore’s (1794-1846) Reception Hall for foreign guests, like Count Okakush, Painter, Y. Taikan, Von-Strangwars (Musciologist) and W. Rothenstein—first publisher of the English Gitanjali (1912). That historic house has been destroyed. His painter nephew Abindranath and Gaganendranath who were also celebrated as fellow-actors with Master Rabindranath. Ardhendu Mustafi (great stage hero) and Hem Chandra Basu Mullick also appeared with the Poet dramatist (1890-1900.) They appeared in the now defunct Bharat Sangeet Samaj (Cornwallis Street). That was the age of “Shakespearean” drama and acting in Bengali. In 1862-64

Michael Madhusudan after writing tragedies and comedies and an Epic—sailed for the West with Satyendranath Tagore, the Elocutionist whom I listened joyously to recite the soliloquy of Hamlet.

From the early Santiniketan period (1901-1921) we often met with the Poet's loyal friends Rev. C. F. Andrews and W. W. Pearson. But our Poet-painter left inimitable pen-pictures of his first two Travels in the West (1878 and 1890) in his prose diaries and letters : *ব্রহ্মদেশ প্রবাসীর পত্র*, *পদ্মকুণ্ড* and other works from *প্রব্রাজ্য*, *শারদোদ্যম* (1908) and *ঋগ্বেদ*, *ব্রাহ্ম*, *ডাকঘর* and *অচলপ্রত্ন* we personally watched the transformation of Tagore's technique as the Actor-dramatist who bewitched us by appearing in the title-roles of *Falguni* (1916) *Bisarjan* (1923) and *Tapati* (1928). Thus before his 70th year and final retirement from the stage, many photos must have been taken by his Indian and foreign admirers, who began flocking to the Poet-artists corner specially since the starting of the International University of Visva-Bharati. Its Rabindra Museum must have had researches to do and recover many rare documents in the line that his Soviet admirers are doing. Tagore and his short visit to the USSR in 1930 when I struggled hard for a foreign tour to prepare the Golden Book of Tagore, reproducing so many foreign photos and homages to Poet on his Septuagenary. My friend Shri Amal Home also used his talent and resourcefulness to publish many rare things in the two special issues dedicated to Tagore in 1931 and 1941 with his latest Bibliography. So we are thankful to the Corporation for publishing now the Centenary Souvenir of the '*Calcutta Municipal Gazette*.'

Painstaking research should be made by all admirers of Tagore in India and abroad—to discover and reproduce his photographs and sketches of the great world traveller, Tagore. He spent 1912-13 in Europe and U.S.A. ; 1916-17 in Japan and U.S.A. with his artist-pupil Mukul De, 1920-21 again in Europe, U.K. and U.S.A. after renouncing Knighthood ; 1924-25 in Burma, Malaya, China, Japan and Argentine (falling ill.) in 1928 in Canada, Japan and Indo-China, just a year after an intensive cultural tour through Java, Bali and Siam (1927) writing there meagre feat poems on the Buddha and the Borabuoer and returning home to develop fully his dance-drama cycles of

শাপমোচন, তাসের দেশ, চিত্রাঙ্গদা ও চণ্ডালি
Thus in the last decade of his creative life Rabindranath not only revived the dance-traditions of India but also developed a most original futurist school of painting leaving to the nation about 2000 copies just as he gave us his legacy over 2000 songs from the Classical to the *Kirtan Baul* and rich Folk-music. A British musicologist—Forestragge ways in his Hindusthan (1910) listened and recorded in staff-notation, only a few pieces which he heard in the Jorasanko House. There the recent Drama, Dance and Music Departments have started working and with the Government acquisition of the old house, more work will be done we hope in the field of creation and conservation.

The Lalit Kala Academy of New Delhi and the University of Paris published Albums of Tagore Paintings. England and Germany, France Rumania and Greece, Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Italy and Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece, Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Iraq which he visited (1929-32) each of these friendly countries of India celebrated Tagore Centenary. So we should keep in touch with them and try to get duplicate records of his songs voice-recitals and rare photos now missing in India. His *Jana-gana* now our *National Anthem*, has been turned and played by diverse artistes in different styles. So we should collect them also to be used in future in the "Tagore auditoriums" in India and abroad. They are the worthy symbols of Tagore's "East West" Philosophy of co-operation and in his second Centenary of not in this first one we may found many creative artists and thinkers of the East, rendering back to India—his Motherland—their devoted researches into the archives of many lands. Hoping this happy collaboration I moved the Moscow Congress that preparation be made right now to complete Tagore Bibliography" on a truly International scale. The 25 Congress of Orientalists (August 1960) endorsed the proposal which will be expanded when they will meet in India (1963) in their forthcoming sessions.

Dynamic pictures of Tagore the Actor-dramatist could be recovered after considerable and devoted research. But still the pictures of his noted contemporaries—if collected—will fill special gallery of the Tagore Museum. His grand

father Prince Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1846) and his father Maharshi Debendranath (1817-1906) gave sittings to many artists who could be traced, modelling their figures or painting their faces. Our National Library, Alipore, has many things to offer. Has any search made in Belvedere, and other historic houses of Calcutta, George Washington's contemporary portrait has been traced in a Calcutta house, Dr. Tagore came into personal relations with Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar Madhusudan, Hem Chandra, Nabin Chandra, Biharilal and Poet Deben Sen. I met Priyanath Sen, reciting French poems to Tagore who enjoyed then. So his philosopher friend Brajendranath Seal (1864-1938) discussed about his early poems (1881-91) and also recited the Sanskrit Ananda Lahari of *Sankaracharya*. Their pictures should find along with many others in the Tagore Gallery of the new Corpora-

tion House to be built on the occasion of the Centenary year. His early admirers like Sir J. C. Bose, Shri Ramananda Chatterjee and Shri Pramatha Chaudhuri and his talented wife Indira Devi and other brilliant members of the "Tagore family" should be represented. In early Santiniketan day his colleagues like Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya (born 1861) and Prof. Mohit Sen, Editor of his second collected works, Pandit Vidushekher Shastri Pandit Kshitimohan Sen, Suresh Chandra Roy, Ajit Chakrabarty and Kalimohan Sen (Rural welfare Officer) and others are yet unrepresented. Famous story writers like senior Prabhat Mukherjee, Charu Bandopadhyaya, Mani Gangopadhyaya and Saurin Mukherjee still remains unhonoured. His Western admirers and colleagues also deserve a special section of the Tagore gallery (from 1910-1940).

I love India, not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil, but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great sons : Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma, Brahma is truth, Brahma is wisdom, Brahma is infinite ; Santam, Sivam, Advaitam, peace is in Brahma, goodness is in Brahma, and the unity of all beings.

The house holder shall have his life established in Brahma, shall pursue the deeper truth of all things and in all activities of life dedicate his works to the Eternal Being.

Thus we have come to know that what India truly seeks is not a peace which is in negation or in some mechanical adjustment, but that which is in SIVAM, in goodness which is in ADVAITAM, in the truth of perfect union ; that India does not enjoin her children to cease from KARMA, but to perform their KARMA in the presence of the Eternal, with the pure knowledge of the spiritual meaning of existence ; that this is the true prayer of Mother India :

He who is one, who is above all colour distinctions, who dispenses the inherent needs of men of all colours, who comprehends all things from their beginning to the end, let Him unite us to one another with the wisdom which is the wisdom of goodness.

Rabindranath Tagore



Ancestry of a Great Life

HEMENDRA PRASAD GHOSE

RABINDRANATH'S genius which has made world acknowledge him as one of its great men was the flowering of a century of family culture ; a culture of which the beautiful after-
afflorescence blossomed in the writing of his nephew Balendra Nath Tagore and can be seen blooming in the eloquence of some of his grandsons.

His grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore towered above most of his co-workers at a time when Bengal could boast of men who were leaders of thought and action. He was intimately connected with the various undertakings of that wonderful man Ram Mohun Roy for the uplift of the people.

He established with some friends the first Indian Bank (the Union Bank) on the lines of European Banks. If it failed that was because the founders were ahead of their time.

He established a business house on the model of English houses in collaboration with a European.

When immediately after deporting the English journalist J. B. Buckingham Adarm framed rules to regulate the future publication of newspapers, etc., within the settlement of Fort William (1823 A.D.) he, together with five other Bengalis petitioned the Court objecting to them

as curtailing the liberty of the Press. The risk he undertook would be apparent from the speech he delivered. Metcalfe made the Press in India free in 1935.

He said that when he submitted the objection some of his friends told him that he would be hanged. The alien Government recognised his influence and merit and made him the first Justice of the Peace. He left for Europe in January, 1841, travelled on the continent, was entertained in England by Queen Victoria, the Court of Directors of the East India Company gave him a medal in recognition of his services to India. He again visited England in 1845 and died in London on August 1, 1846.

During his first visit to England he saw George Thompson who after taking a prominent part in the abolition of the system of Negro apprenticeship was then turning his attention to India as he was distressed at the news that reached India of the ravages of the famine. Dwarkanath persuaded him to accompany him to India and see things for himself. Thomson responded to the call.

His son Debendranath Tagore was a man of outstanding personality. A section of the Brahmos called him a *Maharshi* because of his work in connection with the religious reform. He

established the Brahmo Samaj which stood for pure theism purged of idolatory. But he was an ardent nationalist and did not abjure most of the customs which had become characteristic of the society. When his father died it was found that the mercantile concern he had been running had incurred heavy liabilities. Lawyers told Devendranath that if he would only take refuge under the provisions of the law the debts would be considered on the liabilities of the Company and he would be relieved of them. But he declined to accept the advice—preferring to suffer sacrifice, and pay off the debts. This he did. This scrupulous honesty shines out clearly in an honest and honourable light, amid the darkness of selfishness and unscrupulous intrigues that then prevailed in the society where fat maggots of fidssehood and creeping parasites of greed that breed in the warm confort of corruption then prevailed.

His honest determination not to evade the responsibility of the liabilities of the Company of which his father had been one of the proprietors attracted the attention and enthralled the admiration of all. In politics he was a nationalist—far ahead of his compeers. For some time he was the Honorary Secretary of the British Indian Association. He helped Nabagopal Mitter (popularly called “National Nabagopal”) in organising the *Hindu Mela* for the dissemination of the idea of nationalism and in conducting the *National Magazine*. Rabindranath has also recorded how a letter written to him by a relative was returned because it had been written in English. But he himself had wonderful command over the English language.

Even in his old age, when the infirmities of age had crept upon him, he took a keen interest in all that went in his domestic circle and outside and he purposely settled down in a country house not too far to be out of the reach of the din and bustle of the town. With him work had been the gospel of life. Like a shrewed practical man he had paid off the liabilities left by his father by disposing of unnecessary house property and surplus furniture etc. and by careful management of his landed properties. In his family he was a strict but affectionate head.

His contribution to the development of Bengali language and literature was very valuable.

His magazine the *Tattvabodhini* was unique of its kind at the time and among those engaged by him to help in maintaining its high standard were—the great Vidyasagar, Rajnarayan Bose—high priest of aggressive nationalism and Akshoy Kumar Dutt the first Bengali writer to convey through the mother tongue subjects scientific and results of research. His own prose style was clear, terse and fascinating.

Of his sons and daughters—the eldest Dwijendranath was at once a poet, a philosopher and a theologian. Of Kalidas's *Meghduta* we have about twenty translations in Bengali verse but his was the first and perhaps the best. He was the pioneer in writing a Bengali book on philosophy. The annual address he delivered at the Bangya Sahitya Parishad contained new suggestions for developing the literature. It was of him that a great scholar—Pandit Prarnath Saraswati wrote, he was “a gentleman whose mind is comprehensive enough to grasp at the same time Theology and Science, Poetry and Philosophy.”

In Dwijendranath were combined the characteristics of the *savant* and the saint. When he retired to Santiniketan to pass his days in contemplation of God as he sat under a tree the birds, knowing instinctively that he could do no harm, would hover round him and even sit on his lap !

Devendranath's second son Satyendranath is better known as the first Indian to enter the Indian Civil Service through the door of competitive examination held in England. His entry into the I.C.S. a close preserve for British boys—was so unusual and unexpected that Michael Madhusudan Dutt made it the subject of one of his enquisitive sonnets written in Italy. But Satyendranath was a litterateur of no mean order. His fascinating book on the Parsis of Bombay is a mine of information about Parsi society. His translation of the *Meghaduta* in Bengali verse shows his command over the language and poetic diction. As a youngman he had written his famous song *Jai Bharater Joy* which was sung in the first session of the Hindu Mela—the precursor of the Indian National Congress—which was held under the patronage of his father and which could be replaced only by *Bande Mataram* written many years later. In-

deed having heard it sung in Bombay Romesh Chandra Dutt wrote that it was going to be our National Song. He served in Bombay and after his retirement from service was elected President of the Natore session of the Bengal Provincial Conference when he reminded the audience of the risk they ran in bringing a man from the obscurity of his retirement into the arena of politics.

Another brother Jatirindranath enriched Bengali literature by translating more than a dozen Sanskrit dramas, several dramatic works and Loti's *India* from original French and Lokman Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Magnum Opus* the *Bhagbat Gita* from original Marhati. In his younger days when there was paucity of dramas in Bengali he wrote a number of dramas out gave up writing dramas "for fresh fields" only when he found that Girish Chandra Ghose had appeared to fill up the gap created by the death of Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Dinabandhu Mitter. He was a patriot to the core of his being. He was the pioneer to compete with Europeans in having steamers for inland waterways. It created great enthusiasm in the youngmen of Bengal. He suffered severe pecuniary loss in the venture which ended in a debacle; but there are many ventures in which failure is more glorious than success. He was a man of many ideas to which he could give shape. His map of future India reveals his farsight. He was a voluminous writer.

It is not my purpose to have how the literary genius revealed itself in their successors like Sudhindranath Tagore, Srimati Indira Devi etc. But mention must be made of Rabindranath's sister Srimati Swarna Kumari Devi (wife of Janakinath Ghosal—for years Mr. Hume's co-worker in the Indian National Congress). She not only edited with ability the *Bharati* a magazine which had been started on the model of the *Bangadarsan* by Dwijendranath but was the author of quite a number of works of fiction. It was of her that Aurobindo wrote—"that flower of feminine culture in Bengal Swarnakumari Devi."

Such was the conditions when Rabindranath appeared in a family which had been an important centre of culture. Rabindranath has himself said that Ram Mohun Roy first lifted Bengal

from the water and put it on the foundation of granite and Bankim took over it a stream of ideas and with the soil thus left made it a fertile field for the growth of ideas.

When Rabindranath entered the arena, thanks to the first products of the renaissance—Bengali prose and Bengali poetry had been enriched by various writers and patrons of literature. In prose he had before him the sonorous sesquipedalia of Kali Prasanna Singha's *Mahabharata*, the terse and easily understandable style of Rajendralal Mitter, the sweet and correct language used by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar whom Rabindranath regarded as the first artist in the matter of Bengali language, the simple and expressive style of Akshoy Kumar Dutt and Rajnarain Bose, the vigorous manner of expression adopted by Debendranath Tagore and the colloquial Bengali used by the revolting writer Takechand Thakur. In poetry he had before him the Miltonic thunder of that "mighty mouthed inventor of harmonies"—Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the militant vigour of the style adopted by Hem Chandra, the simple style of Rangalal reminiscent of Pope, as also the lyrics of the Vaishnava poets about the love of Radha and Krishna—redolent of that wild flower aroma which breathes in the legend of Psyche and Cupid. He had narrated how the songs composed by Dasharathi were sung by professional singers before the female members of his family. He was encouraged by the inspiring admiration of his brothers and rewarded for his success by his father.

No wonder the cruel sweat pangs of parturition in literature were felt by him when still young. And his natural gifts were improved by steady practice till they rejoiced in their own power. In the matter of literary work he was encouraged by the members of his family where, as the youngest child of the house, he was brought up in an atmosphere of admiration and adulation. He got every thing too easily in his life. Whether it was family prestige, wealth, literary success fortune rained upon him her favours with such lavish profusion as to generate in him some of the qualities or characteristics of the spoilt child of the nursery. He was allowed to pluck every rose; but if sometimes he scratched his fingers he vailed disconsolate as if

the foundations of the great deep had been broken up and he had been delivered over to the tortures of the damned.

This unfortunate characteristic was seldom more signally illustrated than in the extraordinary speech he delivered to those who had gone to Bolepur to congratulate him on his receiving the Nobel Prize of the year. In a speech which had been written—not in the heat of the moment but in his study—he rebuked the gentleman overlooking the fact that they were guests for the time being the gravamen being that they had recognised his merit only after it had been discovered by Europeans. It never occurred to him that his countrymen, even those like Bankim Chandra and Chandra Nath Bose, had been profuse in praising his literary genius. He overlooked the fact that the novelty of the sentiment expressed in the poems of the *Gitanjali* which was a refreshing novelty to Europe, had been age old in India and the heritage of poets in Bengal. Moreover he should have remembered that familiarity breeds contempt.

The atmosphere in which he had been brought up added to his sensitiveness as a poet and made him intolerant of adverse criticism—even like Keates. Though he had—as a young aspirant launched an unprovoked attack on Michael Madhusudan Dutt; though he had—a little later dared attack Bankim Chandra to crossed swords with whom was a career; though as an older man he had abused Chandra Nath Basu and written something about his one-time co-worker Upadhaya Brahmabandhab which he had to withdraw—he could not tolerate adverse criticism.

It was said of Sir James Picton, that brilliant hero of Waterloo, that he would never have learned to command because he had never learned to obey. The inconstancy of the brilliant amateur was over all his doings. The notes of his eldest brother Dwijendranath on his remark in his letter from Europe had no chastening effect on him because one can not value that for which he had not paid. A literary career—which, later, brought him the recognition of the world—he had not to swallow as a bitter pill. He had himself chosen it and not accepted it as a *damnosa hereditas* he had deliberately taken to it. And he ought to have known that

*"The heights by great man reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, when their companions slept,
Were toiling upwards in the night."*

It is, however, a blessing in disguise when men of genius and ideas are confronted with opposition, because to know the greatness of the truly great it is necessary to pass them time and again through ordeals of adverse circumstances—to smelt away their dross in the crucible of opposition.

Rabindranath's genius reveals precocity. When he was only a boy of twelve years one of his poems was considered fit to be published in the *Tatwabodhini Patrika* a journal which had been the literary training ground of Rajnarain Bose and Akshoy Kumar Dutt as also perhaps of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Next year he was chosen to recite one of his patriotic poems at the annual meeting of the Hindu Mela. Nobin Chandra Sen has recorded in his reminiscences the appearance of Rabindranath in the Hindu Mela. He translated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Bengali. A portion of this translation was subsequently published in the *Bharati* then edited by his eldest brother Dwijendranath.

His father had taken meticulous care to have his children properly educated; and the literary atmosphere in which they were brought up had been created by him.

Rabindranath went on writing in Bengali and his efforts in this direction were incessant. The earlier writings, of course, revealed immaturity but also great promise and in some cases originality which must be regarded as a novelty. He has himself allowed some of them to disappear in the limbo lake of oblivion and if they are being rescued by his admirers it is not only to satisfy curiosity but also to afford opportunity to trace the growth and development of his literary genius. Some of them suffer from intoxication with the author's verbosity while some show unmistakeable signs of original ideas,—which are not appreciated by those who consider everything new as impious. No wonder these productions failed to secure admiration from the majority of readers accustomed to old ideas expressed in old metres. His books had, therefore, to be disposed of at a cheap price to a book-seller (Gooroodas

Chatterjee) who used to sell then in lots once a year,—by advertising in the newspapers. Only 45 copies of Hume's History of England was sold in London in the first year. And what about Fitzgerald's famous *Rubycut*? It fell absolutely flat upon the market. Writes Edmond Goss—"The first publication of his magnificent poem appears to have brought Fitzgerald no breath of recognition from the world outside the circle of his friends. The copies in Mr. Quaritch's shop seem to have found no buyers, and to have gravitated rather surprisingly soon to the four penny boxes outside the bookseller's stalls.

Though intolerent of adverse criticism it is our good fortune that it could not shake Rabindranath, faith in his ultimate victory, and he went on writing poems essays and what not. As a matter of fact Rabindranath's countrymen—the educated classes who were his audience, never denied him the recognition which a young aspirant can claim.

What Johnson wrote of Goldsmith is also applicable to Rabindranath, he was one—

"Who left scarcely any style of writing

untouched

And touched nothing that he did not adorn."

It is seldom that a poet proves a successful journalist. If we accept this opinion we can see the successful pamphleteer in Rabindranath. Many of his well-known papers were written on contemporary events. His connection with the newspaper was not of one who becomes desicated in feeding the furnace of daily journalism. But he was connected with a weekly newspaper. When the Indian National Congress met for the second time in Calcutta in 1890, Arthur Hume—the dictator of the Congress proposed that the Congress should have a Bengali organ in Bengal to popularise it. The reasonableness of his proposal was apparent and the *Bangabasi* the most popular Bengali weekly of the time, was approached. But the proprietor of the paper turned the proposal down. Then a company was registered in May, 1891 to start on the principle of joint-stock the weekly *Hitabadi*. Among the first 17 members of the Company were Rabindranath himself, his brother Satyendranath, his cousin Gaganendranath, his brother-in-law Janakinath Ghosal and his eldest brother's son-in-law Ramani Mohan Chatterjee. Professor Krishna Kamal Bhattacharya was selected to shoulder the editorial res-

pensibility. Rabindranath was a regular contributor to its column, and a few of his short stories were published in this paper.

Prior to the publication of *Hitabadi* Rabindranath acted as Manager of the monthly magazine *Balaka* edited by his sister-in-law, wife of Satyendranath Tagore. During the year of its existence his contributions to it numbered sixty-nine. He wrote poems, articles on various subjects, a work of fiction etc.

When the *Sadhana* was started the name of his nephew Sudhindranath appeared as its editor; but Rabindranath was the "power behind the throne" and later became its *de facto* and *de jure* Editor.

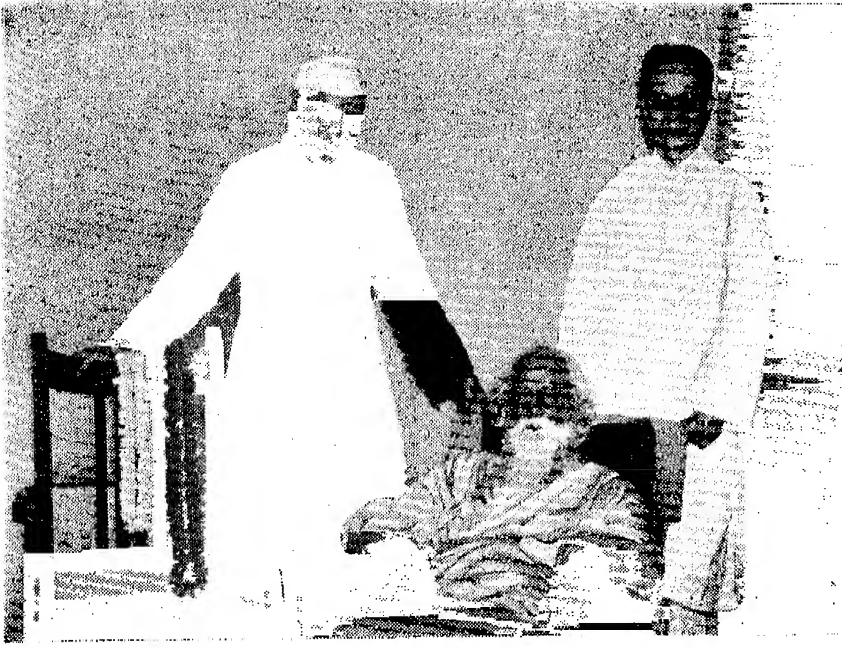
For some time he edited the *Bharati*, the *Bhander*—a magazine published for the propagation of *swadeshi* ideas in economics and the *Bangadarshan*—revived by Sailesh Chandra Majumdar. Thus he could not escape from the spell of journalism upon him.

The day before the reactionary Government enacted a law regarding sedition he delivered in the Town Hall of Calcutta a lecture expressing public indignation over it.

His keen interest in newspaper was abiding. When some Calcutta newspapers fell out he issued the following statement from Santiniketan on December 21, 1937.

"In this most critical period of the history of our province, when problems of tremendous difficulty are loudly challenging us, I earnestly appeal to the editors of our journals to be extremely careful in avoiding the temptation of constantly giving exaggerated emphasis to popular weaknesses,—those that work against the binding force in the fruit-bearing soil of our national being. Innumerable channels of self-depreciation, along which we are carrying on our daily traffic in mutual revilement, are creating deeper mischief in the internal constitution of our body-public than the manoeuvring of those outsiders who pile up a world-opinion against us with the dexterous use of half-truths and facts distorted into a caricature."

Even in the domain of politics where Rabindranath made some mistakes his countrymen forgot those mistakes in their admiration for his achievements. As a matter of fact the mistakes pale into insignificance before his achievements. The poet was temperamentally incapable to take



বিধভারতীতে
জওহরলাল নেহরু
ও তান য়ন সেন

At Visva-Bharati with Jawaharlal Nehru & Prof. Tan-Yun-Shan

১৯৪০-এর এক সভায়
ভাষণদানরত কবি
(অধ্যাপক
চারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য্য সহ)



Addressing a meeting in 1940 with Prof. Charu Chandra Bhattacharyya

"You alone are sufficient reason why
India shall be free....."

—Will Durant to Tagore



IN RUSSIA

রাশিয়ায়



IN AMERICA

আমেরিকায়

—রাশিয়ায়..অবশেষে আসা গেল। যা দেখছি আশ্চর্য
ঠেকে। অতঃ কোন দেশের মতোই নয়। একেবারে মূলে
প্রভেদ। আগাগোড়া সকল মানুষকেই এরা সমান করে
জাগিয়ে তুলেছে।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ

part in active politics because as Gardiner has aptly put it of politics is a crude business anywhere. It certain coarseness of fibre, a hardness of integument, that make it no fit affair for a man of sensitive mind." We have to add to it the dangers that are the inevitable concomitants of active politics by a subject people striving to overthrow autocratic domination; for it often requires the use of the rifle, the bomb and the sword.

(1) Rabindranath after contributing to the independence movement by his songs, poems, papers etc. shrank from it when boycott—as an integral part gained popularity. Though he had advocated the use of the sword which had rusted for want use and the *Kharga* as the weapon in the hand of the country he deprecated boycott and made it his reason (one would not say excuse) for condemning the movement.

(2) On the occasion of a Police Parade at Dacca on August 6, 1924 Lord Lytton as Governor of Bengal had the impudence to say—

"The thing that has distressed me more than anything else since I came to India, is to find that mere hatred of authority can drive Indian men to induce Indian women to invent offences against their own honour merely to bring discredit upon Indian Policemen."

This lie was worse than that indulged in by Lord Curzon when he claimed that truth was a Western virtue. The then Secretary of State for India asked Lord Lytton to substantiate his statement or be recalled. Ruin stared Lord Lytton in the face and he sought the help of an Indian Member of his Cabinet to extricate him from the situation. Rabindranath at that time wrote the following letter to Lord Lytton :—

"Your Excellency

I am being asked by my countrymen to assist them in giving expression to their sense of indignation at the remark made by Your Excellency in referring to the complaint regarding police outrages on Indian women.

There can be no room for doubt that the great majority of my countrymen who have come across Your Excellency's reported words, have been profoundly hurt by what they have taken them to mean—a meaning so far as I am aware, which has up to now not been authoritatively stated to have been wrongly attributed to those words.

At the same time, knowing what I do of Your Excellency personally and of the traditions of chivalry which are your inheritance, I find it extremely difficult to believe that it could have been Your Excellency's intention to cast aspersions on the fair name of the women of our country, or even to hurt the feelings of my countrymen.

So I feel that I owe it to Your Excellency, no less than to myself frankly to write and ask what Your Excellency's real meaning was before saying anything further about the matter.

Trusting Your Excellency will excuse any liberty which I may have unknowingly taken.

I am,

Yours Sincerely,

Rabindra Nath Tagore

Lord Lytton took this opportunity to eat his own words.

But Lord Lytton came out in his true colour when, in a second letter, Rabindranath asked him to produce evidence and he gave a reply which was insulting to Rabindranath and to Indians generally.

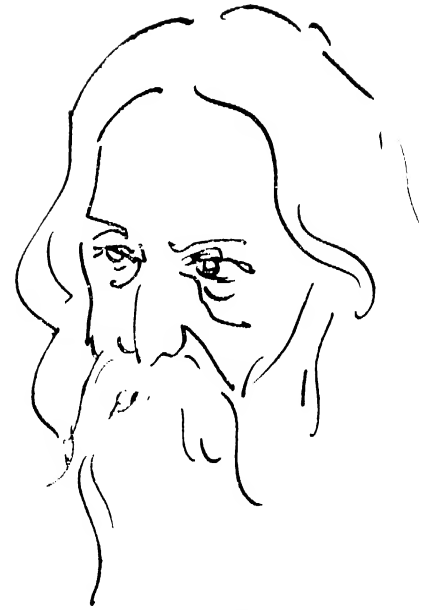
All these Rabindranath's admiring countrymen forgot in their admiration for his achievements in the region of politics. They admired him—nay adored him for the inspiring songs he had composed in his fervour of patriotism, the *mantra* he had composed on the occasion of the *Rakhibandhan* a *mantra* which Bengalis will always remember and try to act up to—and the articles in which he had given proof of his ardent patriotism and indicated "coming events" like a seer. They remembered the address he delivered on what was to be his last birthday.

Before Rabindranath, S. Iyer of Madras had renounced his Knighthood when Dr. Besant was arrested and addressed a long letter to the President of the United States of America detailing the iniquities of British rule in India. But that letter was the argument of a great lawyer and lacked the poetic fire of Rabindranath which made his letter shine like a glittering sword.

His reply to Lord Ronaldshay regarding preventive detention should also be mentioned here.

Thus in politics also Rabindranath rendered a great service to India.

Chronology of events a Great Life



1861-1866 Born in Calcutta, Dwarka Nath Tagore Lane, named after his grandfather, the "Prince" Dwarka Nath, on Tuesday, May 7, 1861, between 2-30 and 3 A.M. (corresponding to Monday, the 25th *Paisakh*, Bengali Era, 1268 and Saka Era, 1783) ; fourteenth issue (ninth son) of the "Maharshi" Debendra Nath Tagore and Sarada Devi (1824-1875).

Debendra Nath purchases in 1853, about 20 *bighas* of land at Bolpur, the present site of Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati.

1867-1876 Admitted to Oriental Seminary ;
AGE 6-15 leaves after a short while to join Normal School ; later placed, along with his elder brother Somendranath and nephew Satya Prasad Ganguly, under private tutors,—makes first attempts at versification in 1868; joins Bengal Academy but plays truant shortly after; for the first time visits Santiniketan with his father, coming back for his *Upanayan* (Brahminical initiation into *Gayatri* prayers) in Calcutta on 6th February, 1873 (25th *Magh*, 1279 B.E., age ; 11 yrs. 10 months) ; composes a drama *Prithviraj Parajaya* ('The Defeat of Prithviraj'), the manuscript of which is lost, accompanies his father—after a short stay at Santiniketan—on an extensive tour through Northern India, staying at Amritsar for a month and four months in the Himalayas (Dalhousie) ; receives from his father regular lessons in Sanskrit grammar, English and rudiments of Astronomy ; returns to Calcutta and is admitted to St. Xavier's School (1874) ; one of his earliest poems under the title *Abhilas* ('Desire') published anonymously in the *Tatvabodhini Patrika* (Nov.-Dec., 1874), it being only mentioned that composed by a 12 year-old boy ; death occurs of his mother (March 8, 1875 : Poet's age ; 13 yrs. 10 months).

EARLY DAYS AND EARLY POEMS—The first poem published over his name appears in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (then an Anglo-Bengali weekly) of February 25, 1875, written for and recited (on February 11, 1875) at the 'Hindu Mela', a patriotic gathering held annually in Calcutta (sponsored in 1867 by Rajnarain

Rose and organized by Nabagopal Mitra and the Poet's cousin, Ganendranath Tagore) ; study under tutors continued at home in Sanskrit, Poetry and Drama (*Kumar-sambharam* and *Sakuntala*) and in English Literature (mainly Shakespeare) ; translates *Macbeth* into Bengali verse (a portion of it was later published in the Bengali magazine, *Bharati* of 1880-81) ; composes a song for a patriotic play, *Sarajini*, written by his fifth brother Jyotrindranath Tagore (1848-1925) ; writes at about this time *Bana Phul* ('The Wild Flower'), a long poem running into eight cantos and published in 1876 in *Jnanankur* (a Bengali monthly edited by Sri Krishna Das) ; also composes some lyrics in the style of Vaishnava *Padabali* (lyrics) under the pseudonym of "*Bhāṁsinha Thakur*" ; goes with his father on a second sojourn to the Himalayan regions.

1877-1884 Returning to Calcutta, appears in
AGE 16-23 the role of 'Alik Babu', a character in a play written by Jyotrindranath, privately staged at the Jorasanko House, contributes poems (including the 'Bhāṁsinha' series), essays, literary criticisms (notably one on Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghanadbadha Kabga*)—all to the new Bengali monthly magazine, *Bharati*, started in 1877 and edited by his eldest brother Dwijendranath Tagore (1840-1926) ; other contributions include *Bhikharini* (a long story) *Karuna* (a novel, unfinished), *Kabi Kahini* (a long poem) and articles on such varied topics as 'English Manners', 'The Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Saxon Literature', 'Beatrice and Dante' and a review of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's poems (*Kabita-Pustak*) ; composes and reads at the Hindu Mela, a poem on Lord Lytton's Delhi Durbar (1877), immediately following the great Indian Famine—an impassioned indictment of the cringing tribute paid by the Princes and peoples of India to "the golden chain" imposed on India by England ; is sent to study English Literature with his second brother Satyendranath Tagore (1842-1923), the first *India* member of the Indian Civil Service, then District Judge Ahmedabad.

IN ENGLAND—Sails with Satyendranath for Eng

land by s.s. Poona, on September 20, 1878 his first book of poems, *Kabi-Kahini* is published on November 5, 1878; arrives in London and goes to school at Brighton staying with Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore and her children—Surendranath and Indira (later Mrs. Pramatha Chaudhuri); shortly after brought to London by Taraknath Palit (later Sir T. Palit) and admitted to the University College; studies English literature under Prof. Henry Morley (brother of Lord Morley),—staying at first with his Latin tutor (opposite Regent's Park) and then with Prof. Barker and Dr. Scott; also studies European Music and is a frequent visitor to the British Museum; attends a session of the House of Commons to hear Gladstone and Bright; contributes (from London) poems (notably *Bhagna-tari*: 'The Wrecked Boat', a verse-ballad and a series of letters (*Europe-Prabhasir Patra*) recording his impressions of England and the English people—published in *Bharati* with critical footnotes by the editor (Dwijendranath); also a number of poems and essays on a variety of topics; begins in England the Verse-drama, *Bhagna Hridaya* ('Broken Heart'), published later in book form (1881).

FIRST PUBLIC SPEECH—Returns to India (1880); writes two musical plays *Valmiki Pratibha* ('The Genius of Valmiki') and *Kal Mrigaya* ('The Fatal Hunt'); appears in the role of *Valmiki* in the former and the *Blind Hermit* in the latter in the performances of the two plays the first in February, 1881 and the second on the 23rd December, 1882 staged at the Jorasanko house before a distinguished gathering including Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894), Gurudas Banerjee (1844-1918) and others; condemns in a scathing article in the *Bharati* and the opium trade carried on by England in China under the title of *Chine Maraner Baghasa* ('The Traffic of Death in China'); discourses on "Music and Feeling" (with vocal demonstrations) at the Lecture Theatre of the Calcutta Medical College (his first appearance as a public speaker) at a meeting held (May, 1881) under the auspices of the Bethune Society (founded 1851) with the Reverend Krishna Mohan Banerjee (1813-1885) in the chair.

BANKIM'S BLESSINGS—Leaves for England in May, 1881 with Satya Prasad Ganguly (his nephew) and his friend Asutosh Chaudhuri (later a Judge of the Calcutta High Court) to study law; changes his mind and returns from Madras and proceeds to Mussoree to meet his father; begins in the *Bharati* his first novel *Banthalakuranir Hat* ('The Young Queen's Market'); publishes *Rudrachandra*, a historical drama in blank verse; publishes *Sandhya-Sangeet* ('Evening Songs') in 1882, which so impresses Bankim Chandra Chatterjee that at a social function at the house of the late Mr. Romesh Ch. Dutt (1848-1909) he takes off the garland of greeting from his neck and places it round that of Rabindranath; stays with Jyotirindranath at Chandernagore,—composing poems and setting some to music; returns to Calcutta and stays at 10, Sudder Street (off Chowringhee, near the Indian Museum); here comes the "Great Illumination" and is written the exquisite poem, *Nirjharer*

Swapna-Bhanga ('The Fountain Aswakened from Dream'), which is the key-poem of *Pravat Sangeet* ('Morning Songs'), 1883; takes a leading part in attempts (which proved unsuccessful) to establish an Academy of Bengali Literature with the assistance of Rajendra Lal Mitra (1821-1893); reads a paper (March 23, 1883) entitled *Akal-Kushmanda* ('Good for Nothing') at the fifth anniversary of the Sabitri Library, deploring the futile social, political and literary efforts of those days; visits Karwar the sea (Bombay) with Satyendranath; returns to Calcutta; marries Mrinalini Devi, daughter of Beni Rai Chaudhuri of Jessore, on December 9, 1883 (Poet's age: 22); writes the verse-drama *Prakritir Pratirodh* (Eng. trans.—Samyasi'), the poems of Chhabi-o-Gan (Sketches and Songs') in the *Bharati*; his first great sorrow in life comes in the death of his sister-in-law, Jyotirindranath's wife (May 20, 1884) to whom he was deeply attached (see "My Boyhood Days"); composes the poems of *Kadi-o-Kamal* ('Sharps and Flats') with translations from Shelley, Mrs. Browning, Ernest Myers, Aubrey de Vere, Victor Hugo and other European poets; reads another paper at the Sabitri Library (August 26, 1884) entitled *Hate-Kalam* ('Theory and Practice') in which he strongly criticises the futile method and humiliating character of the political agitation of the time, is appointed Secretary of the Adi Brahma Samaj (October, 1884); enters into a controversy (writing in *Bharati*) with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (writing in *Naba-jiban* and *Prachar*) on the ideals of Hinduism, which ends in the great novelist's writing a most generous letter of appreciation to the young poet and polemic.

1885-1889 Is placed (April, 1885) in charge
AGE 24-28 of *Balak* a new Bengali monthly
 magazine for the young, edited by
Mrs. Satyendranath Tagore, later incorporated with
Bharati; writes for *Balak* a novel, *Rajarshi*, (published 1887); the story *Mukat* (published 1908); numerous essays and articles, letters and humorous sketches, a brochure on Ram Mohun Roy (1885);; undertakes editing of an anthology of Vaishnava *Padavali* (lyrics) jointly with his friend, Srish Chandra Majumdar; *Rabi-Chhaya* the first collection of his songs published by a friend (1885); publishes *Alochana*, discourses on various topics, and the poems of *Saisab Sangeet* ('Songs of Childhood')—group of about sixteen poems of his early years (13 to 16), dedicated to his deceased sister-in-law Mrs. Jyotirindranath Tagore; attends on his sick father at Bandra (Bombay); goes to stay in Sholapur with Satyendranath; his first child (daughter, Madhurilata, or Bela) born on February 22, 1886; is engaged in several controversies on social and socio-religious subjects in the pages of *Sanjivance* (a Bengali weekly founded by Dwarka Nath Ganguly, Hemba Chandra Maitra, Kali Sankar Sukul, Paresh Nath Sen, Krishna Kumar Mitra—Editor, Gagan Chandra Home—Asst. Editor) against writings appearing in the *Bangabasee* (another Bengali weekly edited by Jogendra Chandra Bose) attack-

ing the ideas and ideals of Brahmo Samaj ; composes and sings the opening song (*Amra Milechhi aj Mayer dake* : 'Assembled are we to-day at the call of the Mother') at the second session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, in December 1886 ; publishes some letters on social questions in *Chithi Patra* (1887) ; Asutosh Chaudhuri publishes *Kadi-o-Kamal* ('Sharps and Flats') 1886 ; the first collection of critical essays on various subjects, *Samalochana* appears in 1888 ; visits Satyendranath, then posted at Nasik ; spends some time at Ghazipore, where he writes most of the *Manasi* group of poems ; returns to Calcutta and stays with his father at Park Street ; reads, at the instance of Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1933), a paper on the ideals of Hindu marriage in the hall of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science with the late Dr. Mohendra Lal Sircar (1833-1904) in the Chair ; a bitter and prolonged controversy follows, in which the Poet receives the support of M. M. Mahesh Ch. Nayaratra (1836-1906), the then Principal of Sanskrit College ; first visit to Darjeeling (1887) ; goes to stay in Shelidah, the headquarters of his ancestral estates, with his wife and daughter and his nephew Balendranath Tagore (1871-1899) ; goes again to Gazi-pore, incessantly writing poems and composing songs ; writes, at the request of Mrs. P. K. Ray, *Mayer Khela*, a musical play, for performance by the members of the Sakhi Samiti (a ladies' club, started by the Poet's elder sister Swarnakumari Devi) ; his eldest son, Rathindra-nath born on the 27th November, 1888, appears in the role of 'King Vikrama' in a private performance of his *Raja-o-Rani* ('King and Queen'), dedicated to his eldest brother, Dwijendranath, and published in 1889 ; leaves for Shahajadpur to write another play, the well-known *Visarajan* ('Sacrifice'), dedicated to his nephew, Surendranath Tagore, and published in 1890.

1890-1899 Staying at Santiniketan composes
AGE 29-38 his magnificent poem on *Megha Duta*
 (inspired by Kalidasa's famous
theme, 'The Cloud-Messenger') ; his second daughter
Renuka born ; 31st January, 1890 ; sails for Eng-
land (August 22, 1890) with his friend Loken Palit
(son of Sir T. Palit) and his second brother Satyendra-
nath Tagore ; arrives in London via Italy and France
and returns to India, landing in Bombay, 4th
November, 1890 after a sojourn of about ten weeks
abroad ; is now called upon to shoulder responsible
work in connection with the management of the Tagore
estates ; makes Shelidah his headquarters and constan-
tly tours by houseboat to different parts of the Zamin-
dari Patisar, Shelidah, Kusthia, Pabna, Kumarkhali
and Cuttack (Balia)—and introduces a remarkably
efficient system of administration, which receives appre-
ciative notice in Government publications ; attends the
sixth session of the Indian National Congress in
Calcutta (Dec. 1890) under the presidentship of
Pherozshah Mehta, when he sings the *Bande Mataram*
on the opening day ; acts as Secretary to a committee of

prominent Calcutta citizens for a public entertainment
to the Congress President in the Town Hall.

SHELIDAH AND "SADHANA"—Joins his nephew
Sudhindranath Tagore, in bringing out a new Bengali
monthly magazine—*Sadhana*, turning out poems, shor-
stories, essays, reviews, political and even scientific
articles and topical notes himself filling more than half
the new periodical every month ; also commences the
famous *Europe Jatrir Diary* ('Diary of a Traveller in
Europe') ; collaborates with Krishna Kamal Bhattachary,
(1840-1932) in starting the Bengali weekly—*Hitabadi*—
contributes of it a number of short stories (notably 'Po-
Master') ; takes part in the ceremonial festivities of the
7th Paus (1298 B.E.) in connection with the consecration
of the prayer hall at Santiniketan ; his youngest daughter
Mira born 12th January, 1892 ; writes his verse-drama
Chitrangada, dedicating it to his nephew Abanindranath
Tagore, who illustrates it (1892).

Tours frequently in North Bengal looking after the
affairs of the estate ; establishes intimate contact with
the life of the people around him,—"the patient, sub-
missive, family-loving, Bengali ryots" goes to Cuttack
(Orissa) by steamer from Calcutta to inspect the
zamindari there ; engages, in the pages of *Sadhana* in
sharp controversy with Chandra Nath Bose (1843-1900)
over the latter's essay (published in *Sahitya*, another
Bengali monthly, edited by the late Suresh Chandra
Samajpati on the metaphysics of dietetics ; also writes
two remarkable articles, *Stri Majoor* ('The Female
Labourer') and *Karnar Umedar* ('The Job-hunter')
showing the interest he was taking in the awakening
labour at reported and reviewed in journals from abroad
writes his humorous play *Goraya Galad* ('Wrong Start')
publishes *Ganer Bahi*, a collection of 352 songs in 1890
writes the poems of *Sonar Tarce* ('The Golden Barge')
published in 1894 ; *Vishitra Galpa*, a collection of short
stories (from *Hitabadi*, *Nabajibani* and *Sadhana*)
published in 1894 and dedicated to the late B.L. Gupta.

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS—Conducts a remark-
able correspondence with his friend, Loken Palit, mainly on
literary ideals and expression in *Sadhana* ; enters, again
in the pages of *Sadhana*, into a vigorous controversy with
Chandra Nath Bose over the latter's essay on the Hindu
doctrine of nibility (*Laya-tattwa*), which appeared in
Bangabasi ; composes his famous satiric poem, *Hing-tin-
Chhat* (believed to be directed against the non-Hindu
reactionary group) ; writes on the comparative worth
values in Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi from the stand-
point of cadence sequence and symphony (his first essay
on phonetics) ; is invited to speak on Education at a
conference at Natore and writes *Shikshar Her-Fer* ('The
Tortuosities of Education') published in *Sadhana* ; 1892
in which he pleads for the acceptance of Bengali as the
medium of instruction in our educational institutions,
his views being endorsed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee
Ananda Mohan Bose Gurudas Banerjee (later Vice-
Chancellor of Calcutta University) ; writes his shor-
story masterpiece 'Kabuliwala' in *Sadhana* ; commences
his profoundly thought-provoking *Panchabuter Diet*

(The Diary of the Five Elements') discoursing on life, literature and art; proceeds to Cuttack by boat with Balendranath Tagore; from Cuttack goes to Puri; visits *Lhanda-Giri* and *Uday-Giri* at Bhubaneswar, on his way to Balia, the headquarters of the Orissa estates of the Tagores; returns to Calcutta for a short stay and proceeds (by boat) to (Shelidah; practises drawing as an experiment of mood-expression but finally returns to poetry; writes *Bidaya Abhishap* ('The Farewell Curse').

"INGRAJ-O BHARATBASI"—Reads his famous political paper *Ingraj-o-Bharatbasi* ('Englishmen and Indians') in October, 1893 under the auspices of the Chaitanya Library in Calcutta with Banikim Chandra Chatterjee in the chair; three months later writes in *Sadhana* on *Ingraj-er Atanka* ('The Englishman's Fear') warning, *inter alia*, the Congress against neglecting the potential value of Muslim unity; evinces keen interest in the problems of cow-slaughter (then claiming attention all over India due to the intense agitation set a foot by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Poona; writes a powerful article *Sabicharer Adhikar* ('The Right For Justice Starts a firm for trading in jute at Kusthia; writes a series of remarkable short stories beginning with *Kshudhita Pashan* ('Hungry Stones') 1895 published *Chhetobhulana Chhara*, a collection of Bengali nursery rhymes in the Sahitya Parishad, 1895; publishes a series of vigorous political writings, notably his essay, *Abdurer Ayeen* ('The Insinuating Law'); writes his poem on *Jivan-Decata* ('The God of Life') and another on Nadi ('The River') which he dedicates to Balendranath on the day of the latter's wedding; composes the *Chaitali*; ('The Last Harvest') group of poems; tours in Orissa in connection with the partitioning of the Tagore estates (1896) writing the lyric drama *Malini* in between; the first collected edition (folio; pp. 476) of his poems published by his nephew Satya Prasad Ganguly on the 15th Aswin, 1303 B.E. Sept.-Oct., 1896; returns from Orissa to the banks of his favourite Padma via Calcutta and Shahjapur; composes for and sings at the twelfth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta his famous song *Agi Bhumana-Monomohini* ('O thou charmer of the world'); composes the *Kalpna* group of poems; writes *Baikunther Khata* ('Baikuntha's Manuscript'); a comic play; reads a paper in tribute to Iswar Chandra Vidya-sagar (1820-1891) at a public gathering in Calcutta at his death-anniversary; attends the Bengal Provincial Conference at Nator (April, 1897) held under the presidency of his brother Satyendranath; receives from Maharajah Jagadindra Nath Roy of Nator (Chairman of the Reception Committee) support to his futile attempt to have the proceedings of the Conference conducted in Bengali; the Conference broken up by the Great Earthquake of 1897; returning from Nator, engages himself in writing a series of verse dialogues—*Gandharir Avedan* ('The Appeal of Gandhari'), Sati ('The Sutee') *Narak-las* ('Condemned to Hell') *Lakshmir Pariksha* ('The Trial of Lakshmi') sends a poem of greetings and encouragement to his life-long friend Jagadis Chandra Bose, who had then been demonstrating his scientific exper-

iments in Europe; is taken ill with neuritis, goes to Karmatar (Santhal Parganas) for a change; proceeds to Simla and benefits considerably in health; returns to Calcutta and takes editorial charge of the *Bharati* (1898-99).

POETRY AND POLEMICS—Writes strongly and indignantly against the reactionary policy of the Indian Government, particularly regarding the treatment meted out to Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was arrested on a charge of publishing seditious articles in *Kesari* (alleged to have led to the murder of Mr. Rand, the Bombay Plague Officer and his friend Lt. Ayerst in June 1898); actively helps in raising funds for the defence of Tilak; reads a paper entitled *Kantha Rodh* ('Throttled') at a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall in protest against the new Sedition Bill (1898); writes on the outbreak of plague in Calcutta, warning the authorities against a repetition of Bombay measures which ended in the murder of Mr. Rand; helps Sister-Nivedita in organizing relief for plague victims of this city; attends the Dacca session of the Bengal Provincial Conference, reading Bengali translation (by him) of the presidential address of the Rev. Kali Charan Banerjee, strongly criticises the Imperial policy of dividing Bengal, politically and culturally, touching specially upon the cultural danger in the systematised displacement of the Bengali language from non-Bengali provinces like Assam and Orissa; expresses himself freely on the topics of the day in such writings (in Bengali) as *Coat vs. Chapkan*, *Mukherjee vs. Banerjee*—referring to Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherjee who held in contempt the Congress attitude towards the so-called 'natural leaders of society' and to Surendra Nath Banerjee, who stood for the democratic ideals of the day; shows up in *Rajtika* ('The Kingly Mark') the mentality of some members of our landed aristocracy varying with one another to top the subscription list for memorial to an Anglo-Indian official; welcomes Dinesh Chandra Sen's *Bangal-bhasa-o Sahitya* (History of Bengali Literature) in an appreciative review in *Bharati*; actively assists in raising funds for the Bengali poet Hem Chandra Banerjee who had gone blind; publishes the verse-epigrams *Kanika* (1899); takes a firm hand with dishonest officers in the jute business (who took advantage of Balendranath's illness) and winds it up taking upon himself the entire financial liabilities; death of Balendranath Tagore, Aug. 22, 1899.

1900-1905

AGE 39-44

Publishes in 1900 *Katha* ('Lays and Ballads') chronicling the deeds of heroism and martyrdom in Rajput, Maratha and Sikh history all seeking to inspire a spirit of deep patriotism and pride in the nation's storied past; dedicates it to his friend, Jagadis Chandra Bose; writes *Kahini* ('Tales') dedicated to another friend of his—the Maharaja Sri Radhakishore Deva-Manikya Bahadur of Tipperah; publishes *Kalpna* ('Fancies') dedicated to Srish Chandra Mazumdar; *Kshanika* ('The Fleeting One') dedicated to Loken Palit; marries his eldest daughter, Madhurilata (Bela) to Sarat Chandra Chakravarti, son

of the late Poet Beharilal Chakravarti; (1900); requested by his niece, Sarala Devi (then editing *Bharati*) to contribute a humorous play, writes his famous comedy *Chira Kumar Sabha* ('The Bachelors' Club')—a veiled protest, in the lightest vein, against the ideology of many contemporary youths, the Poet finishing it in two days at Shelidah, writing day and night living on liquids only; bringing the Mss. to Calcutta to hand it over to the editor, falls down in a faint when going up the stairs to his rooms in the Jorasanko-house.

BANGADARSHAN' AND SANTINIKETAN—Revives, with the help of his friend, Sris Chandra Mazumdar, Bankim's famous monthly journal *Bangadarshan*, and takes editorial charge (1901); with him are associated, as regular contributors, Akshay Kumar Maitra, Bipin Chandra Pal, Chandrasekhar Mukhopadhyaya at the head of a group of brilliant writers; writes a vigorous protest against the insolence of British imperialism in South Africa as manifested in the Boer War; composes the poems of *Naladya* (a remarkable exposition, in verse, of the ancient Hindu ideals and philosophy of life); reads the poems at one sitting to his father Maharshi Debendranath, who gives him his blessings and a purse towards the expenses of its publication (1901); comes in contact with Upadhyaya Brahmanabandhab through common association with *Bangadarshan* in which the Poet deplors the evil influences which tend to "make all cultures, Western or Indian, seem unnatural"; dilates upon the historic foundations of Hindu culture; opposes in a series of remarkable articles the blind imitation of the West whose strength, however, he recognizes; begins (in *Bangadarshan*) "the first psychological novel" in Bengali, *Chokher Bali* ('The Eye-sore') marries his second daughter (Renuka) to Dr. Satyendra Nath Bhattacharya (since deceased).

Relinquishes the management of the Tagore estates and comes with his family to stay at Santiniketan (1901); establishes, with his father's glad consent, *Bolpur Brahmacharyasram* at Santiniketan (December 22, 1901), a school on the pattern of the old Indian *Asrama*—himself teaching the boys, joining in their games, entertaining them, and thus exercising a profound influence on their mind; with him are associated, as the first batch of teachers, Jagadananda Roy, Lawrence (an Englishman), Rewachand (a Sindhi Christian, who afterwards became Swami Animananda) and Pandit Sibdhan Vidyarnava; passes through extreme financial difficulties, having to allocate the major portion of his allowance from the family estate to liquidate the debts of the Jute business and the heavy expenses of running the school; has to sell his house on the sea at Puri, his valuable library, while his wife cheerfully parts with all her ornaments and jewellery to help her husband in tiding over the crisis; *Upadhyaya Brahmanabandhab* joins the Santiniketan School; the Poet attends to his editorial duties of *Bangadarshan* added to the heavy work in connection with the school; propounds Pan-Asiatic ideas in the course of an appreciative review of Lowes Dickinson's *Letters of John Chinaman*; reads two papers

on Bengali Language and Literature' and 'The History of India' at the weekly discussion meeting (*Alochona Samiti*) conducted by Messrs. Mazumdar Brothers, publishers of *Bangadarshan*; joins in the country-wide agitation against Lord Curzon's unwarranted attack on the veracity of Eastern people in his Convocation address at Calcutta University (15th February, 1902); writes trenchantly on the Viceregal performance, quoting devastatingly from Herbert Spencer's "Facts and Comments" instances of England's lying propaganda against the Boers in South Africa.

SORROWS AND SUFFERINGS—Serious illness of his wife necessitates her removal to Calcutta she dies on the 7th Agrayayana, 1300 B.E. (November 23, 1902); returns to Santiniketan with Rathindranath (aged 11, Mira aged 10) and Samindranath (aged 8); composes *Smaran* ('In Memorium') a series of moving poems dedicated to the memory of his departed consort.

Satish Chandra Roy, a young Bengali poet of great promise, joins Santiniketan as a teacher; sudden illness of his second daughter Renuka; takes her for a change first to Hazaribagh and then to Almora; here he composes the poems of *Sisu* ('The Child') with which he used to entertain his motherless young boy Samindra; is compelled to return to Santiniketan on important work; hurries back to Almora on receipt of a wire announcing Renuka's condition to be precarious; walking all the way from Kathgodam as no dandi or horse was available bring her down to Calcutta; summons his son-in-law (Renuka's husband) from England by cable; Renuka dies (May 1903), within six months from her mother's death; maintains uninterrupted his editorial duties, regularly contributing the instalments of his novel *Nowkadubi* ('The Wreck') to *Bangadarshan*; writes *Raj Kutumba* ('The King's Kinsmen') *Ghuso-Ghusi* (Blow for Blow) *Dharmabodher Dristanta* ('Righteousness Exemplified')—all contributions of political import, dealing with the divine right of man to oppose injustice even to the extent of meeting force to force; reads a paper on *Dharmaprachar* ('Preaching Religion') at the old City College hall and creates a flutter in the devotees of the Brahmo Samaj who read in it an attack on its missionary activities.

Satish Chandra Roy dies of small-pox at Santiniketan (February 1, 1904); the school removed temporarily to Shelidah, Prof. Mohit Chandra Sen joins the school as a teacher and brings out *Kabyagrantha*, the second collected edition of Tagore's poetical works in 9 volumes; the Poet protests in *Bangadarshan* against 'patriotism, fashioned in Western mould'; reads his famous essay on *Swadeshi Samaj*, stressing the need for constructive nationalism at a special meeting of the Chaitanya Library Association at Minerva Theatre (July 22, 1904) with Ramesh C. Dutt in the chair; reads it again at Curzon Theatre; following this essay prepares a complete scheme (September, 1904) for the re-organization of the Indian society on the basis of self-help with the village as the centre, the revival of cottage industries to help to remove the poverty of the masses with the co-operation

of the peasant himself, the reduction of the senseless extravagance at socio-religious ceremonies, the establishment of groups of voluntary workers, striving for an understanding between Hindus and Muslims,—all under the leadership of a chosen 'leader of society' (*Samajgati*) enthusiastically supports the movement set afoot in Calcutta for honouring the memory of the great founder of the Maharashtra empire, Sivaji, by holding a festival (1904) ; writes his famous poem, *Sivaji Utsab* and reads it at the Calcutta Town Hall ; however, against the public worship of Bhavani as a part of the festival as likely to alienate non-Hindu feelings ; writes several school books, the late Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal writing the preface to one of them, (*Ungaraji Sopan*), which introduces, for the first time, the "direct method" of teaching English in Bengal.

Death comes to the Poet's father, the "Maharshi" Debendra Nath Tagore, at the age of 87 (6th Magh, 1311 B.E., 19th January, 1905) at the Jorasanko house in Calcutta ; shortly before this the Poet sells for Rs. 2,000 only, the right of publishing in a single edition his short stories, three of his novels, six of his plays, all his songs, some literary criticisms and miscellaneous essays, etc., to the proprietors of the Bengali weekly newspaper *Prabhati*, who collect these in one volume with the title *Debendra granthabali* (pp. 1290) ; addresses a great meeting of students held under the auspices *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* at the Classic Theatre in Calcutta urging them to organize the villages, criticises the findings of an Education Commission (consisting of ten Europeans and one Indian, K. G. Gupta) recommending the division of Bengali text books into four dialectical groups ; early in 1905 takes up the editorial charge of a new Bengali monthly *Bhandar*, published by Kedar Nath Das Gupta ; creates in the pages of the new journal a forum for discussion of the burning questions of the day ; visits Agartala at the invitation of the *Tripura Sahitya Sammilani* and reads a paper on *Desheya Rajya* ('Indian States') appealing to Indian princes to encourage and patronise indigenous arts and crafts and stop the inroads of foreign luxury-product ; actively helps, in association with Okakura and Sata Nivedita, in the foundation of the new Bengal School of Indian Art sponsored by E. B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore ; establishes weaving schools and handlooms in Calcutta and elsewhere (mainly in his estates) ; contributes to *Bhandar* a remarkable analysis of the Imperialist policy of economic exploitation of India in *Raja-Praja* ('The King and His People') Ajit Chakraverti joins the Santiniketan School as a teacher.

THE HIGH PRIEST OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

Following the official announcement of Lord Curzon's decision to divide Bengal into two separate provinces in spite of the united opposition of Bengal and the great meetings of protest at the Calcutta Town Hall (and meetings all over the province) on August 7, 1905, declaring a retaliatory measure, a boycott of British goods, Rabindranath reads a paper entitled *Abastha-O-Bpabastha*

('The Situation and Solution') at a meeting at the Town Hall (August 25, 1905) organized by the conductors of *New India*, the English weekly edited by Bipin Chandra Pal ; the paper is "repeated" at the Albert Theatre within a week ; emphasises, once again, the need of organizing the villages, indicating a programme of constructive non-co-operation ; throws himself into a fierce-blaze of activity,—his "passionate patriotism" finding vent in a large number of 'national songs' ranging over the entire gamut of patriotic emotions resounding all over Bengal ; addresses, frequently, great mass meetings moving thousands by the magic of his words and thus becomes the high priest of the Swadeshi Movement and one of the leading exponents of the new gospel of Nationalism along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose.

INITIATES "RAKhibANDHAN"—To commemorate October 16, 1905 (30th Aswin, 1912 B.E.)—the day the Partition of Bengal was given effect to—the Poet initiates the *Rakhibandhan* ceremony, symbolising the undying unity of divided Bengal ; composes the great *Rakhi* song (*Banglar Mati, Banglar Jal* invoking Divine blessings on Bengal) and leads a huge procession, singing the song, to the Prasanna Kumar Tagore for a ceremonial bath in the Ganges, followed by the exchange and fastening of the *Rakhi*-thread as a badge and symbol of fraternal unity ; no food is cooked in Bengali households, no shop is opened in Calcutta that day as planned by the Poet ; the same afternoon at the great meeting at Upper Circular Road where the late Ananda Mohan Bose (President, Madras Congress, 1898) lays the foundation of the proposed Federation Hall, translates into Bengali the memorable presidential address of Ananda Mohan ; leads, after the meeting, a huge procession through the streets of the city singing his song, *Bidhi bandhan kutbey tami emni saktiman ?* ("Are you so powerful that you can cut asunder the God-made bond that binds us?") to the house of Pashupati Bose at Baghbazar where, in the large compound, he addresses a mammoth gathering appealing for contribution to a 'National Fund'—Rs. 50,000 being raised on the spot.

FOR "NATIONAL EDUCATION"—Frequently attends and addresses the large number of protest meetings following the Bengal Government (Curlye) Circular forbidding students from attending political meetings or singing the *Rande Mata-ani* under penalty of rustication ; addresses large gatherings, mainly of students, at Beadon Square and the Field and Academy grounds, of members (students) of the "Dawn Society" founded by Satis Chandra Mukherjee ; delivers a striking address at the *Rajya* gathering at Pashupati Bose's house ; takes a leading part in the establishment of the National Council of Education, Bengal which sought to provide education on "national lines" to students expelled from Government or Government-aided institutions for political misdemeanour and others as well ; contributes to *Bhandar* a critical survey (*Raj-Bhakti* : "Loyalty") of the situation arising out of the visit of the late King George V in December

1905 as Prince of Wales and the Resolution of Welcome adopted by the Indian National Congress meeting at Benares under Gokhale.

1906-1911 Pays a remarkable tribute to the AGE 45-50 • brave victims of police oppression in different parts of the new province (East Bengal) in pursuance of the policy initiated by its new Lt. Governor, Sir Rampfylde Fuller (*Bhandar* March, 1906); sends his eldest son Rathindranath with Santosh Chandra (the son of his old friend Sris Chandra Mazumdar) to America via Japan to study agriculture; is invited to preside over the first session of *Bangiya Sahitya Sammilani* (Bengali Literary Conference) at Barisal called along with the Provincial (Political) Conference; returns to Calcutta when both the functions had to be abandoned because of the political situation relinquishes the editorship of *Bangadarshan*; pleads for the unanimous acceptance of Surendra Nath Banerjee as the one accredited leader for conducting the national struggle, in the course of a paper entitled *Deshanayak* ('The Country's Leader') in which the Poet deplored the split in Bengal politics ('Moderates' vs. 'Extremists') and observed that a trained general was needed at the head of an army engaged in war,—thus seeking to consolidate the discipline of the people in personal allegiance to a single individual.

Accepts the task of drawing up a comprehensive programme of work for the National Council of Education and reads his paper *Shiksha-Samasya* ('The Problem of Education') in Overton Hall, Calcutta (June, 1906); writes a series of articles beginning with *Shiksha-Samasya* and ending with *Tatah-Kim* ('What Next?'); published the poems of *Kheya* (July 1906) of the *Jatiya Shiksha Parishad* (National Council of Education) and delivers under its auspices a series of lectures explaining the scope and function of Literature; speaks at the Literary Conference held at Bhowanipore simultaneously with the Congress Exhibition in Calcutta (December, 1906) presides, next year, at the adjourned session of Bengali Literary Conference, *Bangiya Sahitya Sammilani* convened at Cossimbazar Berhampore by the late Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nundy.

FROM TURMOIL TO PEACE—Disapproves of the line the national movement was taking, tires of increasing party squabbles, is perturbed at the growing alienation between Hindus and Muslims; disillusionment as much as temperamental conflicts lead the Poet to seek escape and retreat at Santiniketan; writes in *Prabasi* (edited by Ramamanda Chatterjee from Allahabad) *Byadhi-O-takar-Pratikal* ('The Disease and its Cure') striking a note of dissent in the political thinking of the time; advocates a 'change of heart' and 'inner purification' and the acceptance of a radical social programme as absolutely essential for the attainment of *real* independence; is severely criticised for his sudden withdrawal from political activities; Ramendra Sundar Trivedi, one of his foremost friends and admirers, replies to the

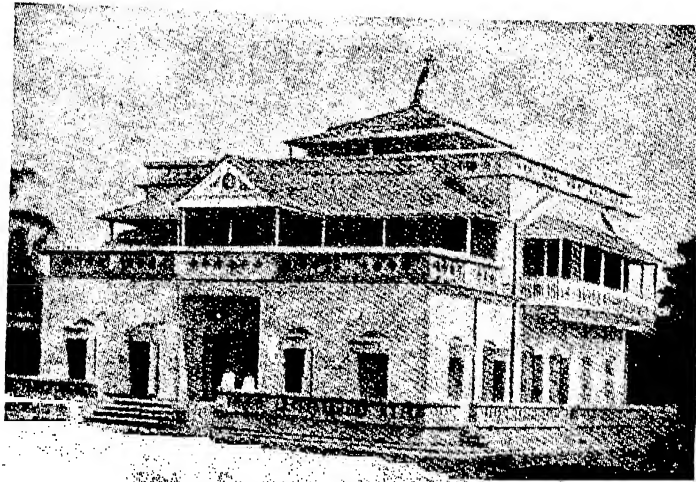
Prabasi article (referred to above) follows one of the most fertile periods of his creative life, giving the world undying literary gifts; publishes (August 24, 1907) his famous poem, *Aurobindo, Rabindrer laho Namaskar* ('I salute thee, Aurobindo') hailing Anrobindo Ghose prosecuted on a charge of writing seditious articles in the new Nationalist daily *Bande Mataram* edited by him; marries his youngest daughter Mira to Nagendra to study agriculture, makes over to the school at Santiniketan the proceeds of a new collected edition of his prose works published by the Mazumdar Library.

Death occurs suddenly of his youngest son, Samindranath, from cholera, at Monghyr (November, 1907); writes out regularly, in instalments, his great novel, *Gora*, for *Prabasi*; is persuaded to preside over the Bengal Provincial (Political) Conference meeting at Patna (January, 1908); delivers his address in Bengali.

The Conference taking place amidst the agitated atmosphere created by the unhappy split at the Surat Congress in December, 1907; again in this address, he calls upon his countrymen for constructive work—and suggests that our young men should form themselves into hands of workers who should go round the villages, bring together Hindus and Muslims in fruitful work, confer with and help the villagers in starting schools, making roads and supplying drinking water and the like.

THE EAST AND THE WEST Reads a paper (25th May, 1908) at the Chaitanya Library entitled *Path-O-Pathega* ('The Way and the Wherewithal') touching upon the tragic incident at Muzaffarpore (the first bomb-outrage in Bengal; March 31, 1908) and the discovery of the bomb factory at Manicktolla, Calcutta (May 2, 1908) leading to the arrest of Barindra Kumar Ghose and his associates; recognises in these outbursts the result of the policy of repression pursued by Government but warns his countrymen against such fatal expressions of natural exasperation, not withholding, at the same time his tribute to the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by these young men, who had, the Poet felt, wiped out the reproach of cowardice levelled at Bengalis; writes another article entitled *Sadapaga* ('The Honest Way') in *Prabasi* (Sraban; 1315 B.E., July, 1908) examining the genesis of the Hindu-Muslim dispute, which was being steadily fostered by an interested third party; addresses the students assembled at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on the historic significance of the meeting of the East and the West in India (*Prab-O-Paschim*; *Prabasi*, Bhadra, 1315 B.E.).

THE SONGS OF "GITANJALI" Creates an exquisite drama *Saradosab* (1908) and has it staged by the staff and students of Santiniketan, himself appearing in the role of the 'Samnyasi'; death occurs of his old friend, Sris Chandra Majumdar; delivers a series of sermons at Santiniketan; writes his first autobiographical sketch for *Bangabhasur Lekhak* ('Writers in the Bengali Language') published by the *Bangabasi Office*; D. L. Roy creates a furore in Bengali literary



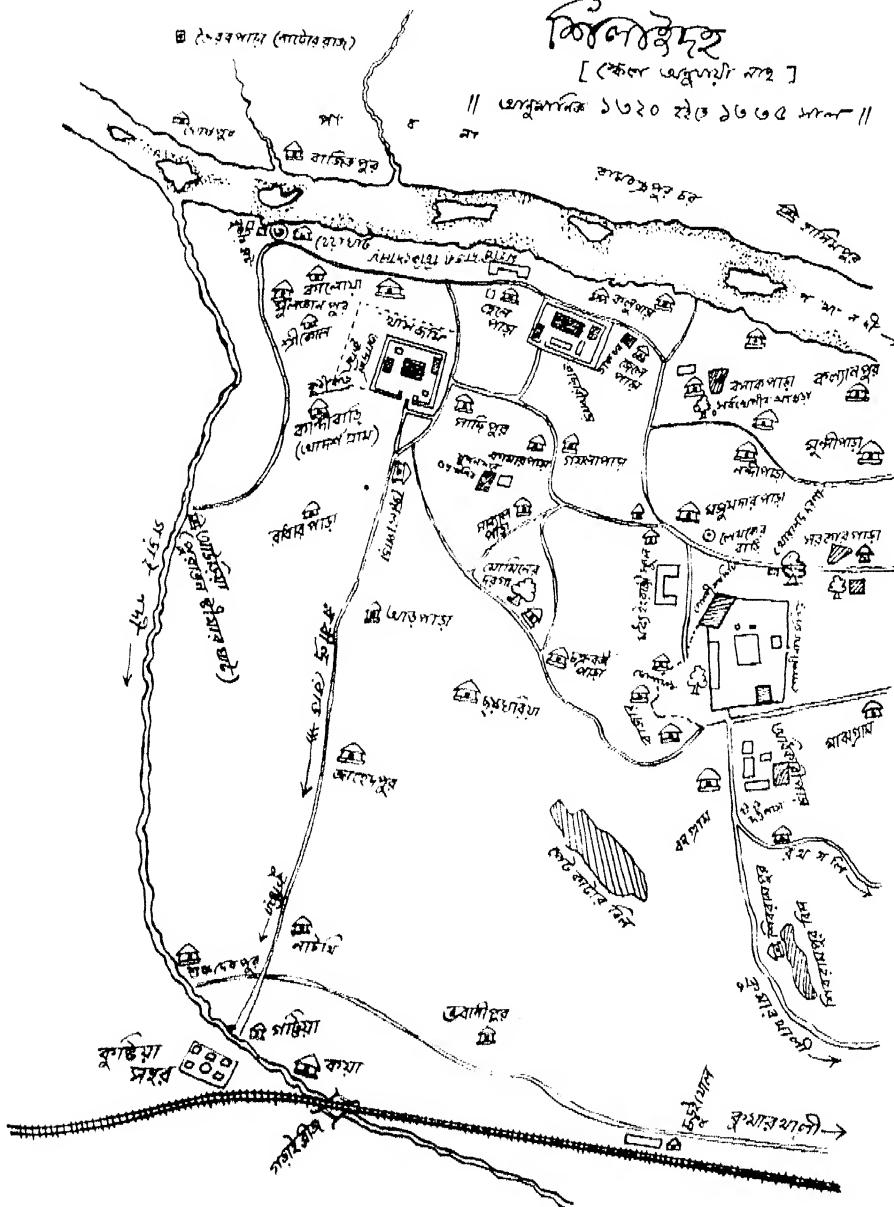
KUTHIBARI AT SHELIDAH

কুটীবাড়ী

কিলিহাট

[ফকির আব্দুল হাফিজ]

॥ আব্দুল হক ১৩২০ হিজ ১৩৬৫ মান ॥

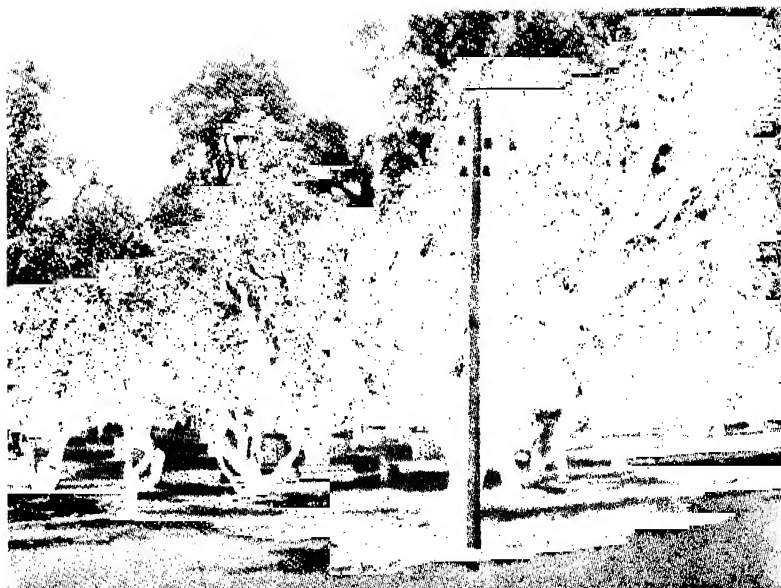


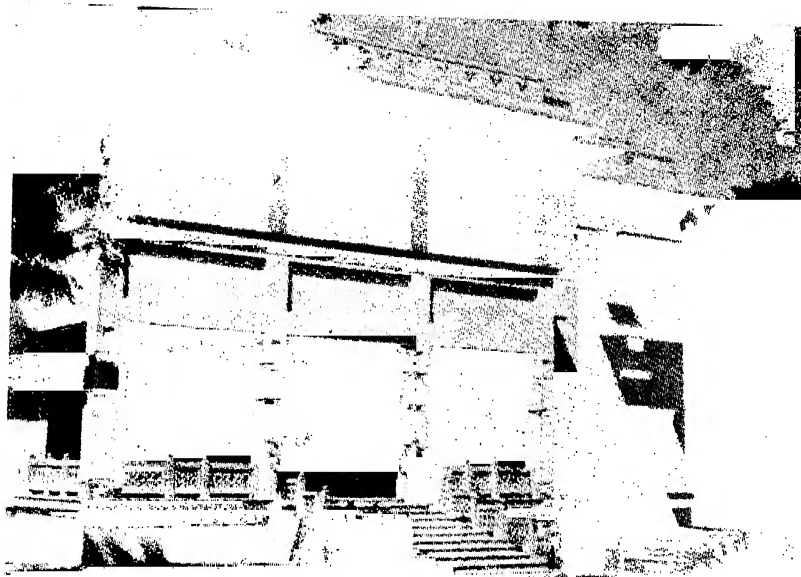


শান্তিনিকেতন

SANTINIKETAN

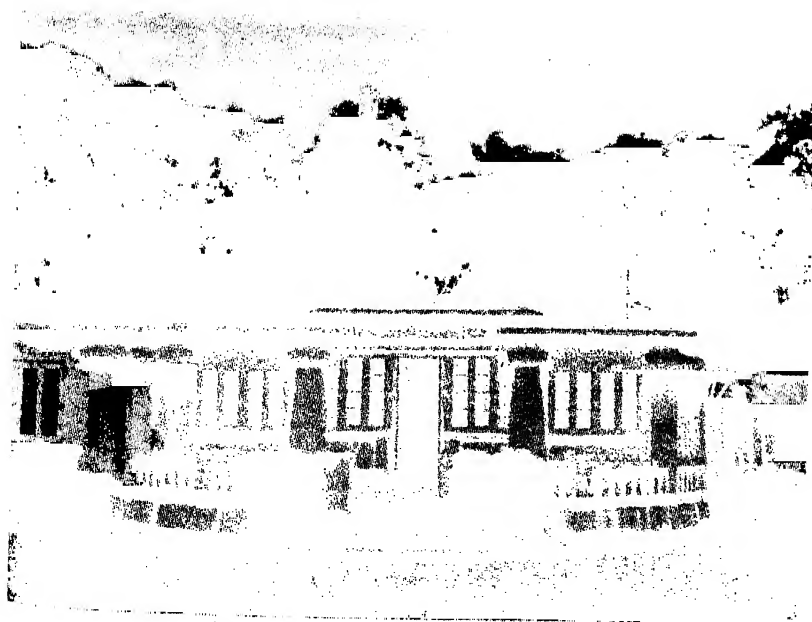
আশকুঞ্জ
AMRAKUNJA





BICHITRA

বিচিত্রা



PUNASCHA

পুনশ্চ

THE CALOUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

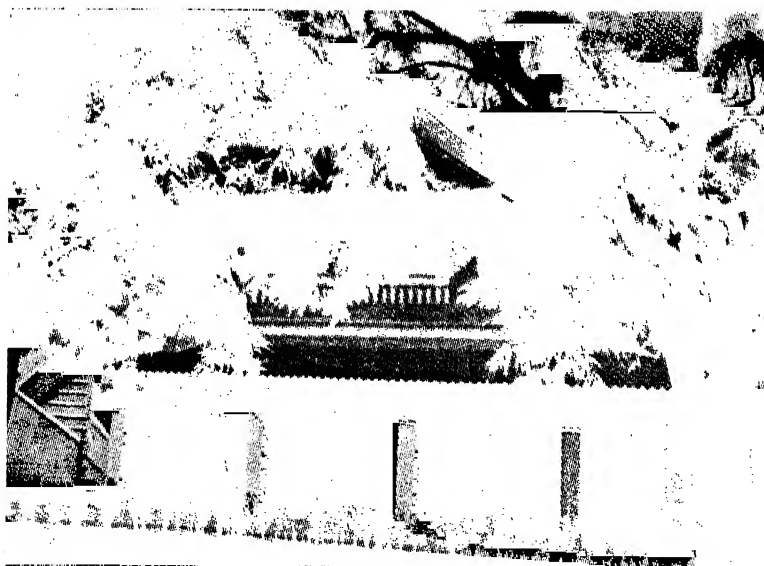
AT SANTINIKETAN
WADING HIS WAY
TOWARDS A MANGO
GROVE

(On a Bengali New Year Day)

With Nepal Roy, Asha
Aryanayakam & others.

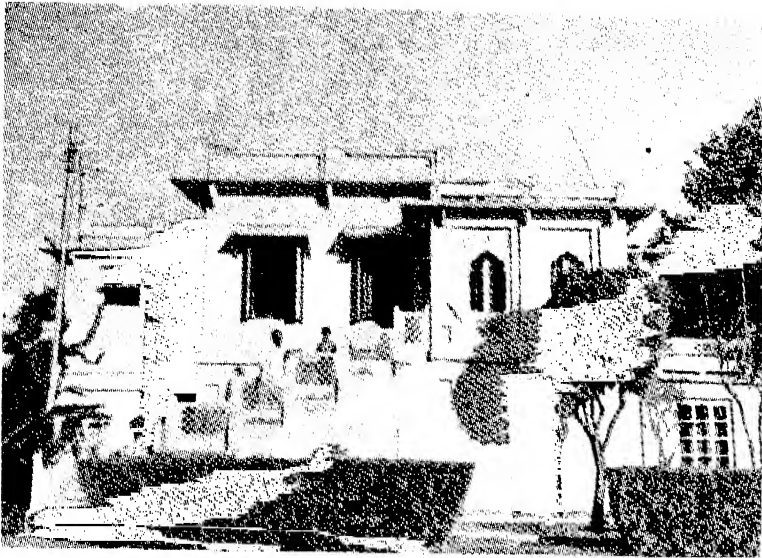


শান্তিনিকেতনে
আমুকুণ্ডের পথে কবি
(নববর্ষ দিবস ১৩৪৭)
সঙ্গে নেপাল রায়,
আশা আর্য্যনায়কম
প্রভৃতি



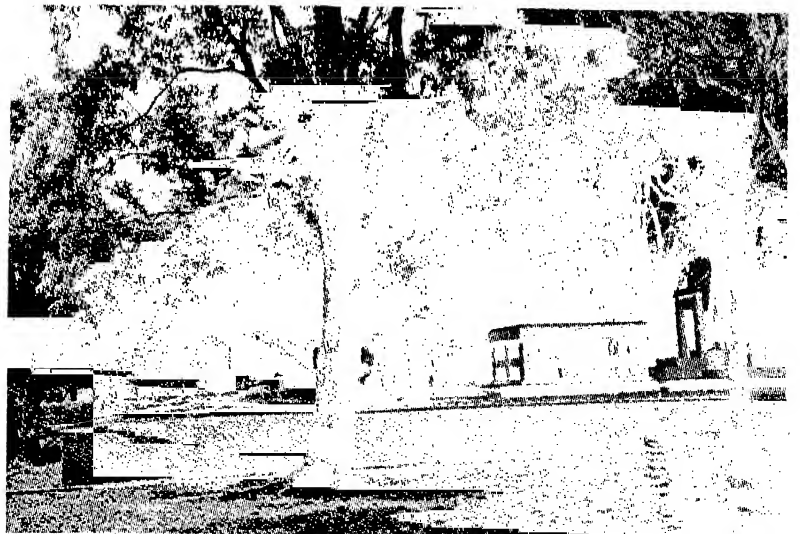
ANANDA PATHSHALA

আনন্দ পাঠশালা



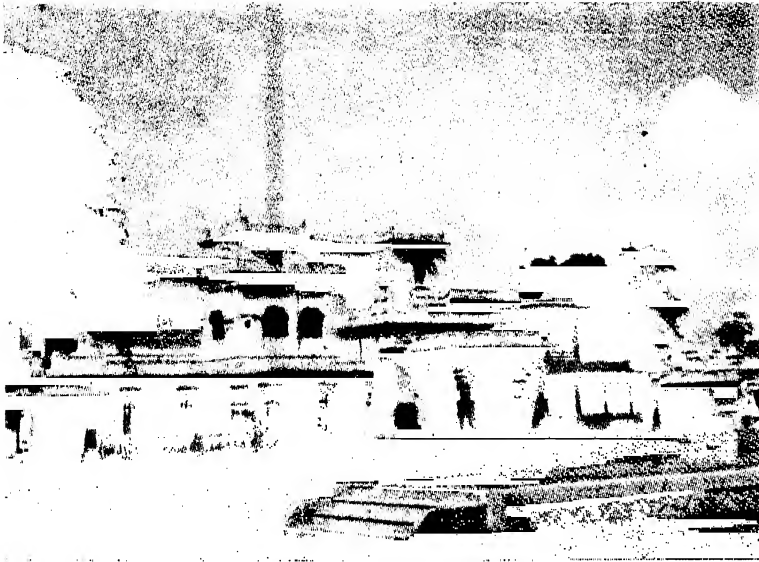
UDICHI

ଉଦିଚୀ



CHATIMTOLA

ଛାତିମତଳା



UDAYAN

উদয়ন

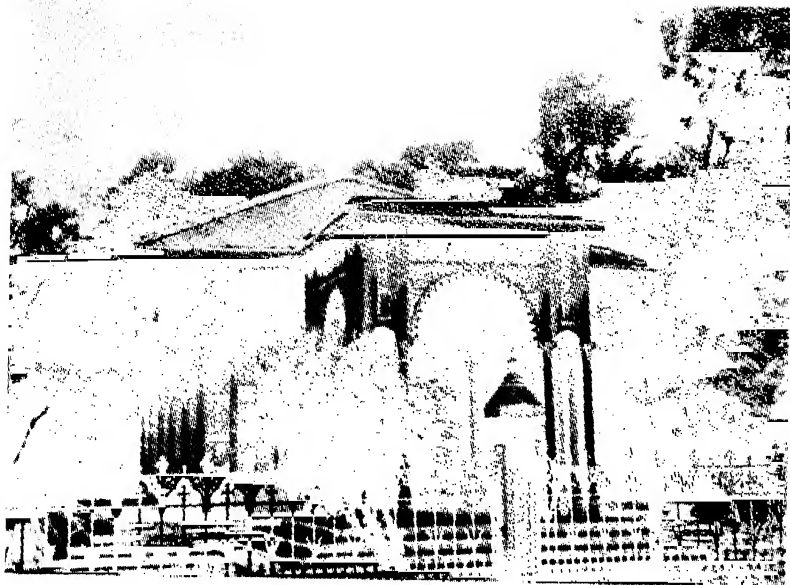


THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

SHYAMALI

শ্যামলী



THE SHRINE

উপাসনা মন্দির



THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

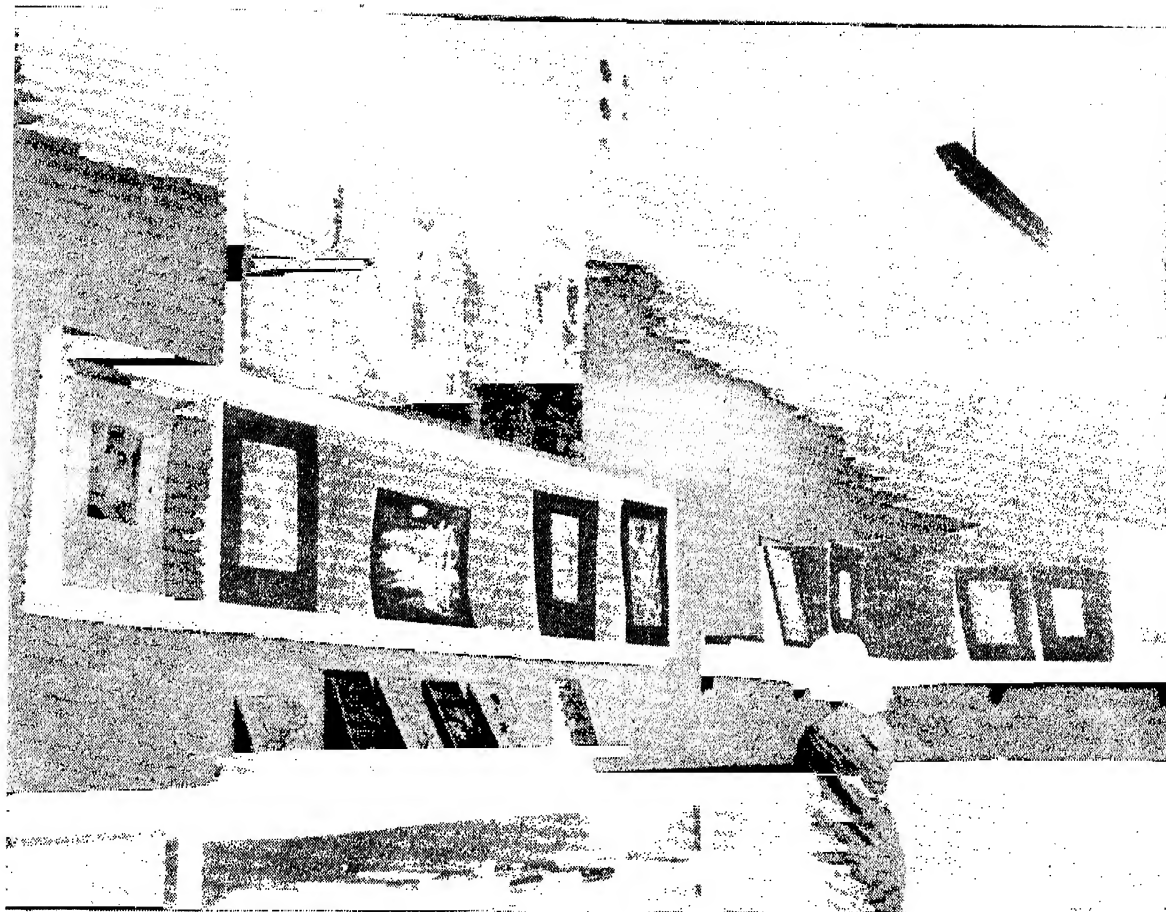
KONARK

কোনার্ক



KALABHAVAN

কলাভবন
(প্রাচীর গাত্র)



KALABHAVAN (inside)

কলাভবন



OPEN AIR CLASS
UNDER SHADY TREES

মুক্ত অঙ্গনে লেখাপড়া



UDAYAN

উদয়ন

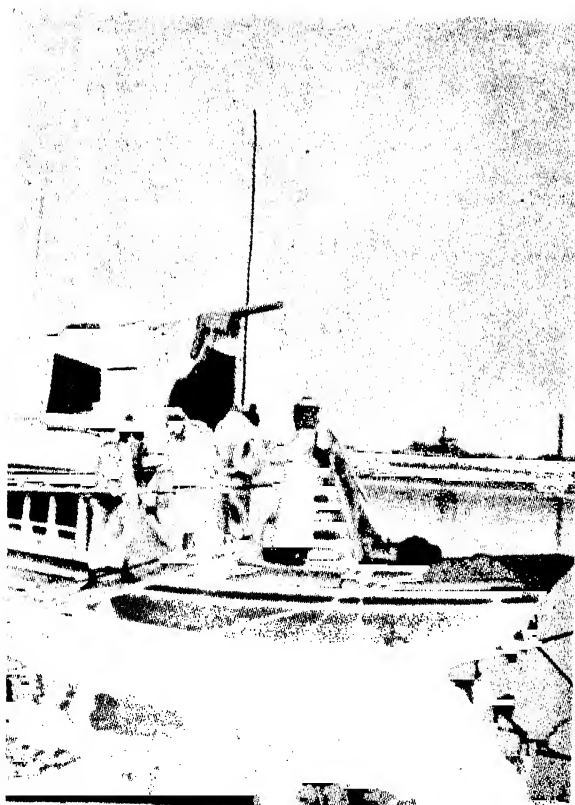
POET AT CHANDERNAGORE

চন্দ্রনগরে কবি



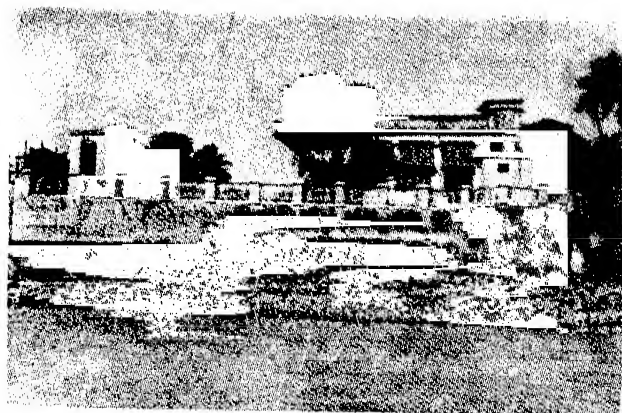
MORAN HOUSE

মোরাণ সাহেবের বাগান বাড়ী



AT HOUSE BOAT

হাউস বোটে কবি



Here the Poet
desired to spend
a few days

একদা কবি ঈপ্সিত ভবন

comes by attacking in the Press and periodicals Tagore's alleged "obscurity" and "immortality"; he (Tagore) ignores the attack; later, at the request of Sankar Majumdar (then Editor, *Bangadarshan*), he gives his opinion on D. L. Roy's criticisms; publishes a play, entitled *Prayaschitta* ('Atonement') in which he inculcates the philosophy of *Satyagraha* in the characterisation of 'Dhananjoy Bairagi'; stages the play at Santiniketan with himself in the leading role; occupies himself at Shelidah mainly with the songs of *Gitanjali*; comes to Calcutta (November, 1909) to receive his son, Rathindranath, returned from America after three years; takes Rathindranath with him on a boat tour through his North-Bengal *Zemindari*; returns to Calcutta and reads a paper, *Tapoban* ('The Hermitage') at the Overtown Hall; delivers his famous sermon, *Vasabodh* on the anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj (11th Magh, 1316 B.E.); marries his son, Rathindranath three days later, to Pratima Devi, a widowed girl connected with the Tagores and dedicates the novel *Gora* to him (January, 1910); publishes the allegorical play *Raja* (December, 1910); attends and speaks at a Literary Conference at Bhagalpore; the first English translation of one of his short stories (Hungry Stones) by Pannalal Bese (later Judge, Bhawal Case) published in the *Modern Review*, Feb. 1910; on the request of Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, the first English translations of two of his poems by Mr. Loken Palit, I.C.S., are published in the *Modern Review* for May and September, 1911—"The Fruitless Cry" and "The Death of a Star."

FIFTIETH BIRTH-ANNIVERSARY Fiftieth Birth-Anniversary celebrated at Santiniketan with great solemnity (May 7, 1911); on this occasion is staged the Poet's *Raja* ('The King of the Dark Chamber') with himself in the role of 'Thakurda'; reads to friends and admirers assembled at the time the memoirs of his youth; Ajit Chakraverti reads his essay on Rabindranath, one of the first attempts at an interpretative estimate of the Poet; goes to Shelidah and revises his reminiscences, which appear in the *Prabasi* serially as *Jibansmriti* (translated into English in 1917); also writes *Achalayatan*, a prose-play depicting the tyranny of fossilised orthodoxy eternally hampering progress; the play, when published in the *Prabasi*, provokes violent opposition from traditionalists; returning to Calcutta after the rains, reads a paper on *Dharmar Artha* (Meaning of Religion) at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Hall, in reply to the critics of his *Achalayatan*; reads another paper warmly supporting the proposed Hindu University at a meeting organised by Chaitanya Library at the Ripon College Hall with Ashutosh Chaudhuri in the chair; Ananda Coomarswamy comes on a visit to Santiniketan and in collaboration with Ajit Chakraverti translates into English some poems of Tagore; writes *Dak-Ghar* ('Post-Office'), "a three-act play of poignance and pathos"; various prose writings are published in *Tanavodhini Patrika* (of which he was then Editor), the *Prabasi*, and the *Bharati* in December

composes, at the request of Ashutosh Chaudhuri, for the twenty-sixth session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta, his famous national song, *Jana-gana-mana-adhinayaka*, later song at the annual Maghotsava festival at the Jorasanko-house.

THE COUNTRY'S HOMAGE

1912-1918

AGE 51-57

At the Town Hall, in Calcutta, on January 28, 1912, a great public meeting is held under the auspices of the *Bagiya Sahitya Parishad* (Academy of Bengali Letters) at which the Poet is presented, on his completing the fiftieth year of his life, with a remarkable address written and read by Ramendra Sundar Trivedi acknowledging in glowing words his great and unique contribution to every department of Bengali literature; the *Parishad* also starts a special fund in his name for the promotion of original research work in Bengali; reads at the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Prayer Hall a paper on *Atma-Parichaya* (Self-introduction) in which he maintains that Brahmos are but Hindus and deprecates the separatist conceit which keeps the two communities apart; is vigorously criticised by the *Tatekannudi* (the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj); delivers a lecture at the Overtown Hall on *Bharatbarsher Itihaser Dhara* (The Main Currents of Indian History) maintaining that the great mission of *Bharatbarsha* was to unite all the conflicting elements gathered in this ancient land and create a rare synthesis to her glory and the benefit of mankind; the Government of East Bengal and Assam issues confidential circulars that the institution of Santiniketan was "altogether unsuitable for the education of the sons of Government's servants"; is mortified as many guardians and parents removing their wards from Santiniketan where at that time arrives Myron H. Phelps, an American lawyer, who publishes a glowing account of the human values of the teaching afforded at this institution; decides to go to Europe to acquaint the world at large with his educational institution and also to study the co-operative system in Denmark; receives at about the same time a request from his friends, Bhairam Promotho Lall Sen and Brajendra Nath Seal, then in England to go there and meet some of the leading English intellectuals, suddenly falls ill on the night before his departure (March, 1912) and has to postpone his visit, his luggage going as far as Madras; goes to Shelidah and convalesces there translating into English some of his songs and poems; is advised to undertake a journey to Europe to recoup his health; sails with his son, Rathindranath, and daughter-in-law, Pratima Devi, from Bombay on the 27th May, 1912, on his third visit to Europe; translates more of his poems while on the boat.

EUROPE AND "GITANJALI"—Arrives in London on June 16, 1912; puts up in a hotel from where he gets into touch with William Rothenstein, the celebrated English painter, who had met the Poet at Abanindra Nath

Tagore's house on a visit to India some years ago; receives warm welcome from Rothenstein to whom he shows the English translations of his poems; Rothenstein, deeply impressed, has copies typed and sends them to Yeats, Stopford Brooke and Bradley, all of whom are enthusiastic in their praise of the poems; Rothenstein arranges a reading at his house, where before May Sinclair, Evelyn Underhill, Ernest Rhys, Fox-Strangways, Charles Trevelyan, Ezra Pound, Alice Meynell, Henry Nevins and others, William Butler Yeats reads the poems, which create a profound impression; here, for first time, the Poet meets Charles Andrews, then a missionary attached to Cambridge Brotherhood and working as a Professor at St. Stephens College, Delhi.

Attends an "At Home" arranged in his honour by the "Union of East & West Club"; on July 19, at the Trocadero Hotel, the authorities of the celebrated English weekly, *The Nation*, give a big party with a view to introducing the Poet to the leading English intellectuals of the day; leaves London to stay amidst pure English rural surroundings and goes to Buttern-ton in Straffordshire as the guest of a son of General Outram of the Sepoy Mutiny fame; returning from Straffordshire goes to another English village, Chalford in Gloucestershire; returning to London, meets Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Stopford Brooke, John Masefield, Lowes Dickinson, Bertrand Russell, John Galsworthy, Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore and others; K. C. Sen translates into English the drama *Raja* ('The King of the Dark Chamber'), while Debabrata Mukherji translates his *Dakghar* ('Post-Office')—both revised by the Poet; in September purchases from Col. N. P. Sinha (Lord Sinha's brother) an old *Nilkuthi* (Indigo-planter's bungalow) with extensive grounds at surul, a village lying three miles from Santiniketan (the present seat of the Rural Reconstruction Centre of Visva-Bharati).

FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA—Sails for America (accompanied by Dr. D. N. Maitra) and reaches New York on October 27, 1912; proceeds to Urbana (Illinois); speaks from Unitarian chapels at several places on Metaphysical topics; on November 1, 1912, the India Society of London publishes a limited edition (750 copies only) of *Gitanjali* (Song-Offerings) containing English translations of 103 poems principally from his three Bengali works—*Naiṛedya*, *Kheya* and *Gitanjali*—with an introduction by Yeats and a pencil-sketch by Rothenstein as frontispiece; the book immediately takes the English literary public by storm and is acknowledged as the greatest literary event of day; leaves Urbana in January 1913 for Chicago where he stays as the guest of Mrs. Vaughn Mody and lectures on "Ideals of Ancient Civilisation of India" at the University; speaks also on "The Problem of Evil" at the Unitarian Hall, Chicago; goes to Rochester to attend the Congress of Races and meets there the great German philosopher Rudolph Eucken, who warmly greets him, having become an ardent admirer on reading "Song-Offerings"; reads his famous address on "Race Conflict" at the Congress of Races on

January 30; goes to Boston and addresses a distinguished meeting of intellectuals there; returns to Urbana on March 10, via New York and Chicago, delivers a course of lectures at Harvard University, which are later published as *Sadhana*; MacMillan publishes a popular edition of *Gitanjali* followed by *Gardener* and *Crescent Moon*; the India Society brings out his translation of *Chitrangada* in English as "Chitra".

In India on May 26, at Viceregal Lodge, Simla, Rev. C. P. Andrews reads, at a meeting presided over by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, a paper on the life and poetry of Tagore. His Excellency in his presidential remarks describing Rabindranath as "The Poet Laureate of Asia"; returns from America to England in June, 1913; repeats his American lectures at the Caxton Hall, London, on Indian religion and philosophy, deploring, *inter alia* the "retrospective and archæological interest" taken by Western scholars in the great religious scriptures of India; goes to the Duches Nursing Home for a surgical operation for a malady which Homeopathy had failed to cure; boards the "City of Lahore" on September 4, to return home; shortly before departure learns for the first time about the devastating floods in Bengal (Burdwan) and speaks strongly in protest against the English news agencies failing to send out or English newspapers to record such news of vital importance to India; arrives in Bombay on October 4, 1913 and reaches Calcutta on October 6.

NOBEL PRIZE AND WORLD FAME—On November 13, 1913 comes to India the news that the Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to the Poet for his *Gitanjali* which was acclaimed by the Swedish Academy as the greatest piece of idealistic work in Literature for the year; great rejoicings take place all over the country; a large number of people of all classes go from Calcutta to Santiniketan in a special train, on November 23, to congratulate the Poet, who, however, replies with some asperity accusing most of them who had come having waited to recognise him till the West had acknowledged his poetry in this striking manner; is severely criticised for this "inhospitable reply" but is supported by Bipin Chandra Pal, who, in an article in his *Hindu Review* said; "No man of Rabindranath's position and sensibilities could have been less bitter under similar circumstances" and "the rebuke of his reply was neither undeserved nor undignified". Ramsay MacDonald—then in India as a member of the Public Service Commission—visits Santiniketan and afterwards writes an article on it (*The Daily Chronicle*, January 14, 1914); the honorary degree of D.Lit. is conferred on him the University of Calcutta, on December 26, 1913, at a special convocation held at Government House, Calcutta, in which similar honours were also conferred upon Prof. Paul Vinogradoff, Hermann Jacobi, Sylvain Levi and other savants of Europe who had come to India at the invitation of the University at a formally hands over the Nobel Prize Diploma and Medal to the Poet.

The house at Surul having now been fitted up with

laboratory equipment for scientific research, a formal "housewarming" takes place on the first day of the Bengali Era 1321 (April, 1914) ; Charles Andrews and William Pearson return from South Africa to Santiniketan where they had gone together "to fight", in the words of the Poet, "our cause with Mr. Gandhi and others" ; Nandalal Bose, the famous artist, pays a visit to Santiniketan and is accorded a reception by the Poet ; the drama *Achalayatan*, is staged at Santiniketan, the Poet himself appearing in the leading role with Pearson, who spoke Bengali beautifully writes a foreword to a Bengali book, *Basantaprayan*, written by Sarajubala Das Gupta (daughter of Dr. Brajendranath Sil) in memory of her husband, Rasanta Das (a brother of C. R. Das).

"SABUJ-PATRA" AND SANTINIKETAN—Pranath Chaudhuri ("Birbal"), lawyer and man of letters, starts (May 8, 1914) the *Sabuj-patra* (Green leaves) a Bengali periodical ; the Poet contributes every month poems, essays, stories to this new journal, which emphasises the characteristic Indian values, satirizes conventionality, hollow snobbery and hazy romanticism ; goes to spend the summer at Rangbari Hills in the district of Almorah ; composes poems in obvious distress of mind filled with dark forebodings of an uncertain approach of pillage and destruction ; on return to Santiniketan, receives a foreign visitor, an Arab poet, named Bustamee who had translated Tagore's poems into Arabic from the English texts of "Song Offerings", "Crescent Moon", etc. his poems are now being translated into all the principal European languages—his fame spreading all over the world ; contributes to *Sabuj-patra* *Strir patra* (Letter from a Wife), a short in which rings the conflict then gradually awakening Indian womanhood to the tragedy of their position ; it creates a furor and Bipin Chandra Pal caricatures the story by writing in the *Narayan* (a paper started by C. R. Das) *Mrinaler patra* (Letter from Mrinal) ; the *Narayan* criticises Tagore for lacking in realism and indulging in exotic writings which had no root in the soil ; the Poet replies in the *Sabuj-patra* with two essays, *Bastab* and *Lokahita*, deploring, in the latter essay, the tendency on the part of those engaged in social service to patronise the common people while dealing with the problem of poverty and social uplift.

THE WAR BEGINS—On the declaration of the War in Europe, the Poet delivers a remarkable sermon at Santiniketan (August 5, 1914) following it up with an essay, *Ma ma himsi* (Thou Shalt not Hate) ; comes to Calcutta and reads an address of felicitations on the occasion of Ramendra Sundar Trivedi's fiftieth birthday celebration ; returning to Santiniketan, goes to stay in Surul where he composes, in 46 days 108 songs (*Gitali*) and teaches them all to his grand-nephew, Dinendranath Tagore, who was the "custodian and storehouse" of his musical compositions ; also writes some of the poems published in the *Sabuj-patra* and later collected in *Balaka* and two short stories, *Bhai Phonta* and *Sesher Ratri* the

last being later translated by himself and published in English as "Mashi" ; goes on a visit, to Bodh Gaya and Allahabad ; goes up for a few days to Darjeeling returns to Santiniketan but leaves again for Agra and goes to Allahabad ; composes at Allahabad his famous poem "Shah Jahan" (*Balak*).

FIRST MEETING WITH GANDHIJI—The students and staff of the Phoenix School (started by Gandhiji in Transval) come to Santiniketan (in response to the Poet's invitation, previously sent, at the instance of Andrews) influenced by these new arrivals, the students of Santiniketan resolve to help the suffering jute cultivators in East Bengal by giving up using sugar and flour with meals and thus saving money for the purpose ; the Poet, however, disapproves of this and writes : "the best form of self-sacrifice which they could undertake was doing some hard work to earn money" ; delivers in Calcutta February, 13 (1915) a remarkable address at the inauguration of *Bangiya Hitasadhan Mandal* (Bengal Social Service League founded by Dr. D. N. Maitra) ; returns to Santiniketan on the 22nd February, narrowly missing Gandhiji and Mrs. Gandhi, who had come early in February, straight from Bombay after his visit to England, to see the Phoenix School lads but was hastily called away to Poona on Gopal Krishan Gokhale's death ; staying at Surul, writes *Phalguni* and reads the play at Santiniketan on March 4, 1915 ; (later it is published in the *Sabuj patra*) welcomes Gandhiji to Santiniketan on March 6 ; on the 10th March, at Gandhiji's suggestion, an "experiment" is started in training the boys to be self-supporting without the help of cooks, servants and sweepers, the play *Phalguni* is staged at Santiniketan with the Poet in the role of the blind 'Baul'.

"PHALGUNI"—Receives Lord Carmichael (Governor of Bengal) at Santiniketan on March 20, 1915 ; the Phoenix School students and staff leave for Hardwar with Gandhiji, who comes to take them away on March 31 ; staying again at Surul, composes many new songs and poems ; a cycle of four stories published in the *Sabuj-patra* appears in book form under the title of *Chaturanga* ; now commences writing a novel—*Ghare-baire*,—which is serially published in the *Sabuj-patra* is the recipient of a Knighthood on the King-Emperor's Birthday (3rd June, 1915) ; Andrews and Pearson, go to Fiji Islands to enquire into the grievances of Indian indentured labour ; the Poet proceeds to Kashmir with Rathindranath, Pratima Devi and the poet Satyendranath Dutta ; composes several of his most well-known poems while at Srinagar contributes to the Shakespeare Tercentenary commemoration Volume a remarkable Bengali sonnet, at the request of Shakespeare Society ; returning to Calcutta, reads a paper at a public meeting at the Rammohan Library on *Sikshar bahar* ('Vehicle of Instruction'), urging the adoption of the Bengali as the medium of instruction at the local university ; the *Phalguni* is produced at the Jorasanko house in aid of the famine-stricken people at Bankura, the Poet appearing in the

dual roles of young "Kabisekhar" and the blind, old 'baul' (Jan, 1916) ; returns to Santiniketan and finishes *Ghare-baire* ; *Baluka* published ; writes in the *Sabaj-patra* an article entitled *Chhatra-sasan* protesting vehemently against the repression of students after the Oaten episode at the Presidency College, drawing pointed attention to the growing estrangement between Englishmen and Bengalees ; his collected poetical works in Bengali are published in ten volumes, by the Indian Press, Allahabad ; MacMillan & Co., publish "Fruit Gathering" and "Hungry Stones and Other Stories".

Proceeds to Japan, on May 3, 1916 with Andrews, Pearson and Mukul Dey ; reaches Rangoon on the 6th and is given a rousing reception ; leaving on the 10th, arrives at Singapore on the 15th ; reaching Hongkong on the 22nd May is informed by the Captain that under orders from authorities the ship has to cut out Shanghai and proceed straight to Japan as the public had grown impatient at the prospect of seeing him ; arrives at Kobe on May 29 ; is entertained first by the Japanese Press Association and then at a great gathering of Japanese intellectuals, when Count Okuma welcomes him with a speech in Japanese and the Poet replies in Bengali ; stays for some time at Hakone as the guest of Hara, the celebrated painter, to whom he dedicates "Stray Birds" later published by MacMillan ; criticises the Japanese Imperialist policy against the young Republic of China and speaks on June 17, at the Tokyo University on "The Message of India to Japan" ; and on "The Spirit of Japan" in July at the Keio Gijiku University ; falls immediately into official disfavour ; receives and rejects an invitation from Vancouver (Canada) as a gesture against that British Dominion's discriminating treatment of Indians.

INDICTMENT OF NATIONALISM—Leaves for America and reaches Seattle (Washington) on September 18, 1916 ; is met by J. B. Pond of Pond Lyceum, a well-known American lecture bureau, and enters into a contract with him for a lecture tour in the United States ; the first public reception in America is given by the ladies of Seattle Sunset Club ; at the hall of this Club the Poet also delivers his first public address (arranged by Pond) on September 25, speaking on "The Cult of Nationalism", condemning the greedy Imperialism of Western nations and also vigorously denouncing British rule in India ; lectures next at Portland (Oregon) on the 27th, at San Francisco (California) on the 30th, where he pleads for "more of the fundamental idea of brotherhood and less of organisation" ; a section of the American Press strongly criticises his speech on Nationalism ; is feted by the Japanese of Frisco on October 3, and by the Los Angeles public on October 4 ; attends a concert by Paderewski and has a long talk with him ; reads at the Columbia Theatre, New York, one of his short stories and gives readings from the English translation of *Raja* ; Ramchandra, the Sikh leader of the Indian revolutionaries banded under the "Hindus-

than Gadr" party, attacks the Poet in a newspaper article on the alleged ground of 'sailing under false colours by retaining the privilege of a British Knighthood and airing anti-British views' ; a rumour spreads of a plot against his life by the Hindusthan Gadr Party, but the Poet refuses to place himself under police protection as he does not believe in the rumour ; Ramchandra later denies in the *Portland Telegram*, any intention to kill him ; though advised by some friends to cut short his lecture tour, the Poet refuses to change his plans and goes to Santa Barbara where he repeats his lecture on Nationalism ; then tours lecturing through Pasadena, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Iowa, Milwaukee, Louisville and Detroit where his lecture on "Nationalism" was characterised in the Press as "sickly saccharine mental poison" (Detroit Journal, Nov., 14) ; at the very exclusive Twentieth Century Club at Cleveland he speaks against America's lust for gold ; comes to New York where in an interview with the Press (Nov., 18) he denounces Western Nationalism and speaks strongly against America's anti-Asiatic policy ; lectures at the Carnegie Hall in New York at the School of Political Education on "The World of Personality" ; speaks next at Boston at Mount Holyoak College on "Art", at Taramount Temple, on "Nationalism" where he receives "one of the warmest welcomes ever accorded to a lecturer in Boston" (*Boston Herald*, Dec., 6, 1916) is welcomed by President Hadley at the Yale University as a "seeker after light and truth" ; returns to New York for a farewell speech, on December 12, at the Amsterdam Theatre, which is packed to capacity, goes to Cleveland again to plant a tree in Shakespeare Garden ; then to Colorado to see the famous springs and returns again to San Francisco where he writes the foreword to Paul Richard's book, "To The Nations" (published by J. B. Pond) ; leaves for Japan, on January 21, 1917 and halts enroute at Honolulu for a day ; Pearson stays in Japan and the Poet returns to Calcutta with Mukul Dey, on March 17, 1917.

THE "VICHITRA" CLUB—Returning to Calcutta the Poet has a pleasant surprise in the shape of the *Vichitra* School of Arts and Crafts sponsored and organized in his absence by Gangauendranath Abanindranath and Rathindranath at his Jorasankohouse ; finds also another institution the "*Vichitra* Club", which soon becomes the meeting place for Bengal's intellectuals and literary people ; in the *Sabaj-patra* writes *Bhasa Katha* strongly supporting Pramatha Chaudhuri in his attempt to popularize the literary tongue and to write the Bengali language in the same way as it is spoken ; comes to Calcutta for a gala celebration of his birthday by the *Vichitra* Club ; writes short stories (*Tapasvini* and *Palia Number*) for the *Sabaj-patra* protests strongly against the internment of Mrs. Besant for her political activities ; in Calcutta, reads, first at Rammohan Library (Aug. 4, 1917) and then at the Alfred Theatre, his famous political paper *Kartar Ichhaya* ;

Karma ('As the Master Will It'), Bhupendranath Basu presiding at the latter place; composes, at the request of Pandit Malaviya, his famous national song *Desha, Desha mandita kari mandita taba veri*, which is sung for the first time at the meeting at Rammohan Library; reads a paper on *Sangiter mukti* (Redemption of Song); in a letter to a friend in England (which is published by the Indian Press on September 7) he strongly expresses himself on the ruthless repression then practised by the Government of Bengal against political workers by imprisonment and detention without charge or trial, "in a few cases driving them to insanity or suicide"; Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal, denies the Poet's charges in a speech at the Bengal Legislative Council; to this the Poet replies later in a statement (Jan. 11, 1918), in which he gives a concrete instance of a young student at Santiniketan, who had run away from the school chagrined at his failure at the annual test, being arrested and detained, without charge or trial, under the all-embracing Indian 'DORA'.

POLITICS AGAIN. A controversy having arisen among Bengal Congressmen as to making Mrs. Besant, then under internment, the President, of the Indian National Congress Session in Calcutta in December, 1917, the Poet warmly supports the cause of Mrs. Besant against the opposition of Surendranath Banerjea and his followers; receives, on September 8, a deputation consisting of Motilal Ghose, C. R. Das, Bipinchandra Pal, B. Chakravarti, Hirendranath Dutta, Fazlul Haq, who offer him the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee of the forthcoming Congress Session; is elected on September 11 as Chairman of the Reception Committee in place of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur, who had been previously elected resigns his Chairmanship in favour of Rai Baikunthanath Sen Bahadur when the controversy ends with the acceptance of Mrs. Besant as President by the 'Moderate' Party; attends the Congress meeting on the opening day when he receives a great ovation and reads 'India's Prayer' (a poem) immediately after the singing of *Bande Mataram*; *Dak-Ghar* (Post-Office) is staged by the Poet at the Vichitra Club hall, he himself appearing in the role of 'Thakurda', supported by Gaganendranath, Abanindranath, Rathindranath—the performance being witnessed by Gandhiji, Tilak Maharaj, Malaviyaji, Mrs. Besant and other prominent Congress leaders; the communal riots in Behar (Sahabad) provokes from his pen the famous political paper on *Chhoto-o-Boro* ('The Great and the Small') meets in Calcutta at his Jorasanko residence, E. S. Montague, the Secretary of State, who had come out on his "Reform" mission; returns to Santiniketan and receives Sir Michael Sadler and other members of the Calcutta University Commission; writes a devastating satire on the educational policy of the Government of India (*Totakahini*: 'The Parrot's Training'); coming to Calcutta, delivers a lecture on *Chhanda* (rhythm); composes the poems of *Palataka*; his fiftyseventh birthday is celebrated at the Vichitra Club.

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On May 9, 1918, Gourlay, then Private Secretary to the Governor of Bengal (Lord Ronaldshay), informs Andrews that the Government had received information from San Francisco, that the Poet had been connected with the young Indian revolutionaries undergoing trial there, and that, it was rumoured, he had received German money for his American tour in 1916, when he spoke so strongly against British rule in India; the Poet writes an indignant letter to President Wilson, and although assured of generous reception by the American public (through the American Consul at Calcutta) gives up the idea of foreign tour which he had been contemplating for some time; receives the news of Pearson's arrest and deportation to England, at the instance of the British Government, for alleged anti-British activities in Japan and America; declines an offer of Rs. 50,000 by 'Tilak for undertaking' a cultural propaganda tour' in Europe and America; on May 16, 1918, his eldest daughter, Bela Devi (Mrs. Sarat Chandra Chakravarti) expires in Calcutta after a protracted illness; returns to Santiniketan on May 28, cancelling at the last minute a trip to Darjeeling and stays there for four months occupying himself mainly with teaching work; leaves in the autumn for a tour in Madras but stops for a few days at Pithapuram with the Maharaja and returns to Calcutta; Ajit Chakravarti dies in Calcutta (Dec. 1918); on the 22nd December, 1918 at Santiniketan the Poet explains his idea about creating an institution which would be a true centre for the different cultures of the East and lays its foundation stone at the site of the present tennis court at Santiniketan; Mac-Millan & Co., publish "Lover's Gift and Crossing", "Mashi and Other Stories".

Out on a tour of South India, the Poet arrives at Bangalore (January 10, 1919) from where he goes to Mysore, Ooty, Coimbatore, Palghat, Salem, Trichinopoly, Seringapattam, Kumbakonam, Tanjore, Madras—speaking to large and enthusiastic audiences on "The Message of the Forest", "The folk Religions of India" and "The Centre of Indian Culture"; coming to Madras speaks as Chancellor of the "National University", founder by Mrs. Annie Besant, whose guest he was at Adyar; returns to Calcutta and speaks publicly in this city for the first time in English, to a crowded auditorium at the Empire Theatre, on "Education", reads next at the Bose Institute "The Message of the Forest".

THE GREAT GESTURE.—On the inauguration by Gandhiji of his Satyagraha movement as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Act, the Poet writes a letter in which he expresses his apprehension of the movement giving rise to forces beyond control; on April 13 takes place the shooting of unarmed citizens of Amritsar at Jalianwallah Bag; follow Martial Law in the Punjab and attendant atrocities; strict censorship prevents news of official outrages reaching other provinces; the poet comes to know of these at the end of May; not receiving support from political leaders in his attempt to

go to the Punjab, he comes to Calcutta (May 27), where he fails to have convened a public meeting of protest over which he offers to preside ; on May 30, 1919 he writes the "historic letter" to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, renouncing his Knighthood in order to "give voice to the protest of millions of my countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror"; all this time the Poet is engaged in writing the sketches of *Lipika* (published in 1922) ; a new Bengali monthly, the *Santiniketan-Patrika* the organ of the Santiniketan Asram is started under his editorship.

The nucleus of the Visva-Bharati is formed, when on July 3, 1919 Vidya-Bhawan is opened for advanced studies in ancient Indian literatures and later in Tibetan and Chinese with Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri at its head ; published "The Centre of Indian Culture" lectures, composes songs and takes classes at Santiniketan ; adapts *Sarodatsav* as *Recensodh*, which is staged at Santiniketan ; spends the autumn (Oct-Nov.) at Shillong ; returning to Santiniketan, opens a class for dancing under two instructors brought from Manipur ; visits Sylhet (December 6, 1919) ; Lord Ronaldshay visits Santiniketan (Feb. 1920) ; adapts *Raja* as *Arupratan* ; goes to Gujrat, at Gandhiji's invitation, to attend an anniversary function of the Gujrat Literary Society ; spends a day at Gandhiji's Sabarmati Asram ; visits Bhavnagar and Limbdi ; receives a gift of Rs. 10,000 from the ruler of Limbdi for Santiniketan ; goes to Ahmedabad, Bombay, Surat and returns to Calcutta in May, 1920.

Leaves Calcutta for Europe on May 11, 1920 with his son and daughter-in-law ; sails from Bombay on May 15 ; on board the boat has often long talks with the Aga Khan (who, quite frequently, reads out to him from Hafiz and discusses Sufism) the Maharaja of Alwar, the Jam-Saheb of Nawanagar (Ranjit Singh) ; translates during the voyage some of his Santiniketan sermons, which are later published as "thought Relies" ; lands at Plymouth on June 5 ; is received by Pearson whom he meets after three years ; coming to London meets Rothenstein, Hudson (the celebrated author of "Green Mansions") Fox-Strangways (the author of "The Music of Hindustan"), Cunningham-Graham (the author of "Cartegena"), Nicholas Roerich (the Russian painter who had not yet risen to fame), Bernard Shaw, Prof. Gilbert Murray and others ; goes to Oxford (June 19) to speak to the students at a function at which Dr. Robert Bridges, the Poet-laureate of England, was to have presided but later excused himself from attending ; meets Col. Lawrence (of Arabian fame), who complains to him that the British Government having failed to keep any of the promises he had made to the Arabs he would never be able to face to those people again ; from Oxford the Poet goes to Cambridge and meets there, among others, Prof. Anderson, Lowes Dickinson and J. M. Keynes ; attends a reception arranged in his honour by the Union of East and West Society, where Dame Sybil Thorndyke, the celebrated English actress, recites a poem composed for the occasion by Laurence Binyon.

A MESSENGER OF PEACE—Calls at the India Office on Montagu, the Secretary of State for India and Lord Sinha (Under-Secretary) and discusses with them the Punjab affairs, pointing out to Montagu that it was not so much the punishment of General Dyer that India asked for but moral condemnation of the crime by the British Nation ; the callous condonation of General Dyer by the House of Lords, the debate in its ugliness of racial arrogance distress him beyond measure ; signs, along with others, a letter to Premier Lloyd George suggesting Montagu as the successor of Lord Chelmsford as Viceroy of India ; visits Rammohan Roy's tomb at Bristol ; meets Sir Horace Plunkett and "A. E." (George Russell) ; prepares for a trip to Scandinavia but cancels the visit at the last moment ; goes to France (August 6, 1920) "with a feeling of relief" from "studied coolness" on the part of many of his English friends and admirers ; stays in Paris as the guest of M. Kahn, known as "the richest man in France" meets Professors Sylvain Levi and De Brum ; visits the battle-fields in Northern France and is much disturbed by scenes of devastation ; goes for a few days to Southern France which he likes ; prepares his lecture on "The Meeting of the East and West" ; returns to Comtesse de Noailles, the celebrated French poetess, who tells him that she was the Clemenceau when the news of the declaration of the War came and that both turned to read from the French translation of his *Gitanjali* ("Song-Offerings") to get over the intense feeling of depression which was overpowering them ; goes to Holland, being invited there ; tours lecturing through the Hague, Leyden, Utrecht ; is warmly received everywhere ; writes to J. B. Pond of his intention to visit America and receives a cabled reply that he unable to organize any lecture for the Poet as popular feeling in America is just then not favourable to him ; visit Brussels (where he is received by the Belgian King) and Antwerp, and returns to Paris ; is extremely annoyed at the inexplicable failure of his letters from England and India reaching him in time ; returns to London ; resolves to go to America, "for they must listen to the appeal of the East", and sails with Pearson, arriving in New York on October 28, 1920.

GANDHIJI AND NON-CO-OPERATION—In India Gandhiji comes to Santiniketan, accompanied by Shaikat Ali, in September, 1920, on his way back from the Special Congress meeting in Calcutta ; the Santiniketan School decides not to send up boys for the Matriculation examination of Calcutta Colleges who have non-co-operated. come out and start "village work" at Surul.

Asked about his opinion on Gandhiji's non-co-operation by Press reporters in New York, declares that he believes in the power of the spirit and never in brute force ; lectures at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on "The meeting of East and West" (Nov. 10) on "The Mystic Poets of Bengal" at the Brenner (Philadel ; hia) Women's College (Nov. 12) ; watches a game of football at Princeton (Nov. 13), and returning to New York attends the fifteenth anniversary of the

National Art Club; lectures at New York (Nov. 20) on "The Poet's Religion"; is, however, frustrated in his attempts to raise funds for Visva-Bharati, encountering at every step, subtle but no less vigorous hostility engineered by powerful influences on the alleged grounds of his being anti-British and pro-German; at a meeting organized by the Poetry Society of New York he cannot check his feelings of disappointment; goes to Chicago (Feb. 1) and stays there for some time as the guest of Mrs. Mody with an interval for a short lecture tour in Texas, sails for Europe (March 19, 1921).

Speaks on "The Meeting of East and West" in London (April 8); flies to Paris after three weeks and is again the guest of M. Kahn; meets Romain Rolland on April 17; lectures at Musée Guimet at a meeting arranged by the Société des amis d'Orient; also addresses the Comité National d'études Sociales et Politiques (founded by M. Khan) on "The Public Spirit of India" (April 25); receives as a gift for Visva-Bharati a splendid library from Sridhar Bana, a rich Indian pearl-merchant in Paris.

On April 27, comes to Strasbourg and reads "The Message of the Forest" at the University; next at Geneva, on April 30, speaks on "Education" at the Rousseau Institute; his 61st birthday is celebrated all over Germany; visits Lucerne and Basle; lectures at the Zurich University (May 11); stays with Count Keyserling at Darmstadt; lectures at Hamburg University (May 20), at Copenhagen University (May 23).

Visits Sweden where he is received with great honours; speaks at the ancient University of Upsala and then at the Cathedral, the Archbishop of Upsala himself leading a big procession with torches to conduct the Poet to the meeting; speaks at a great banquet given in his honour by the Swedish Academy, Stockholm; is received by the King of Sweden; comes back to Berlin where he stays with Hugo Stinnes and delivers two lectures at the University "scenes of frenzied hero-worship" marking the meeting; is feted by Walter Rathenau; speaks at Munich University where he meets Thomas Mann; then at the University of Frankfurt on "The Village Mystics of Bengal"; stays with Grand Duke of Hesse at Darmstadt, where he gives daily talks at the School of Wisdom of Count Keyserling; addresses a great gathering of German labourers and attends an open-air festival in his honour; visits Vienna, Prague, speaking at both the cities to large and enthusiastic audiences; leaves Paris on July; catches the India-bound *Morca* at Marseilles and arrives in Bombay on July 16, 1921.

• "THE CALL OF TRUTH"—From Bombay comes straight to Santiniketan in the midst of the Non-co-operation movement at its height; great pressure is put upon him from all sides to join it; against the whole force of the current popular sentiment, he expresses his own views in a paper entitled *Sikshar Milan* ("The Meeting of Cultures") reads at a meeting organised by *Jatiya Siksha Parishad* (Council of National Education) at the Calcutta University Institute Hall, on August 15, with Sir Asutosh Chaudhuri in the chair; repeats the lecture at Alfred

Theatre on August 18 with Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray as Chairman; Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the novelist, in a paper entitled *Sikshar Birodh* (The Conflict of Cultures) essays at a reply; the Poet follows with another paper—*Satyar Abhwan* ("The Call of Truth") reads at the Calcutta University Institute on August 29 in which he definitely rejects 'Non-co-operation' as enunciated by Gandhiji; the Mahatma replies in *Young India* with his article "The Great Sentinel". *Barsha-mangal* ("The Rain Festival"), a new and unique type of musical soiree produced at the Jorasanko house on the 2nd and 3rd September—the Poet reciting some of his famous rain-poems, Maharaja Jagadindranath Roy of Natore accompanying on the mridang; on the 4th the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad presents an address of welcome; meets Gandhiji, at the Jorasanko house the 6th September (1921), the meeting taking place behind closed doors and none except Andrews being present; Pearson returns to Santiniketan after five years; L. K. Elmhirst comes with an annual gift of; 50,000 from Mrs. Straight (later Mrs. Elmhirst) for rural reconstruction work at Surul; on November 10 comes Prof. Sylvain Levi, the first Visiting Professor of Visva-Bharati, who organizes advanced research in Tibetan and Chinese studies.

VISVA-BHARATI INAUGURATED—On December 22, 1921 Visva-Bharati is formally inaugurated at a meeting presided over by Dr. Brajendranath Seal (*Pais* 8, 1328 B.E. at which the constitution of Visva-Bharati is adopted with Rathindranath Tagore and Prasanta Mahalanobis as Joint Secretaries (Jugma-Sachiva); makes over to the Visva-Bharati by trust-deed the land, buildings, library and his other properties at Santiniketan, the entire amount of the Nobel Prize money and the copyright of his Bengali books.

Writes a drama, *Muktadhara* (The Waterfall), and reads it to his friends at his Calcutta residence on the 16th January, 1922; on February 6, is founded *Sriniketan* (Department of Rural Reconstruction of Visva-Bharati); prepares to produce *Muktadhara* but gives up the idea on receipt of the news of the arrest of and sentence to six-years' rigorous imprisonment of Gandhiji (March 10); his 62nd birth-anniversary quietly observed at Santiniketan; presides on July 8 over the Shelley Centenary meeting in Calcutta; attends the memorial meeting in honour of the Poet Satyendranath Dutta where he reads a most remarkable elegy; *Visva-Bharati Sammilani* is started in Calcutta July 1922, addresses the students of the Presidency College on his ideals of Visva-Bharati; in August, 1922, at the International Congress of Peace and Freedom held at Lugano, attended by Romain Rolland, Paul Heyse, Georges Duhamel, Prof. Forel, Bertrand Russell and John Haynes Holmes, a "Tagore Evening" is organised by Dr. Kalidas Nag in which these leaders of European thought and others take part; *Surodhasab* is produced in Calcutta, first at Alfred Theatre and then at Madan Theatre (Sept 16 and 17)—the Poet with members of the Santiniketan staff appearing on the stage; on September 19, the Poet goes to Bombay and then to

Poona (with Prof. Levi) where he reads a paper on "Indian Renaissance" detailing his views on the ideals which Indian universities should strive to attain.

From Poona he goes to Mysore, Bangalore, Madras, Coimbatore, Colombo, Trivandrum, Cochin, speaking on "The Vision of Indian History", "The Spirit of Modern Times", "As Eastern University", "The Forest University of India" and "The Growth of My Life's Work" (Sept. 25 to Oct. 22, 1922); comes to Bombay on the 22nd October; goes to Ahmedabad and to the Sabarmati Ashram and then returns to Santiniketan after an absence of about three months; Lord Lytton, Governor of Bengal, visits Santiniketan; writes the poems of *Sisu Bhola Nath*; his second brother, Satyendranath passes away on 9th January, 1923; the Poet visits Sindh (Karachi and Hyderabad), Feb., March, 1923; *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* started under his editorship in April, 1923; Dr. Taraporewalla of Calcutta University lays the foundation stone of "Ratanikuthi" (the guest-house for foreign visitors to Santiniketan), for which Sir Ratan Tata had donated Rs. 25,000 spends the summer at Shillong and writes there a drama, the *Raktakarabi* (later translated into English as "Red Oleanders") delivers a lecture on Bankimchandra Chatterjee at a meeting of Bhowanipore Literary Society (June 28); discusses, in an interview, current political topics with special reference to Hindu-Muslim relations, expressing himself in favour of the idea of Hindus organising themselves but laying emphasis on the economic aspect of the conflict and suggesting that real unity can only be achieved on a fusion of economic interests of the two communities; publishes his considered views on the same subject in a contribution to the July-September issue of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* ("The Way to Unity"); for three days at the Empire Theatre, Calcutta, the drama *Visarjan* ('Sacrifice') is produced (August 25, 27, 28, 1923); the Old Poet himself appearing with astonishing success as young Jayasingha returns to Santiniketan; receives a cable from Italy announcing the death, in a train accident, of Pearson (1924); writes a drama *Rathajata*; issues an appeal for funds for the establishment of a hospital at Santiniketan in memory of Pearson; tours the States in Western India collecting funds for Visva Bharati; on the invitation of Calcutta University delivers a series of lectures on Literature, speaking *ex tempore*; presides over the annual conference of the Anti-Malarial Societies of Bengal held at Alfred Theatre in Calcutta (Feb. 1924).

PLAIN-SPEAKING IN JAPAN

Leaves for China from Calcutta on March, 21, 1924, accompanied by L. K. Elmhirst, Kshitimohan Sen, Nanda Lal Bose and Kalidas Nag at the invitation of Liang Chi-Chao, President of the Universities League Association of China; receives great ovations *en route* at Rangoon, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore; arriving at Shanghai on April 12, the Poet explains that the old relation between India and China was "for disinterested" human love and nothing else; and, on April

17, speaking to a Japanese audience, deprecate the Imperialist greed which had got hold of Japan and wishes that Asia should be free from the curse of Western materialism and nationalism; speaks in the same strain also, very strongly, at another meeting organized by the Anglo-American Society; is attacked by English and American papers for these speeches; Chinese students are dissatisfied with his comments against Western ideals which had powerfully captured their imagination; reaches Peking on April 23; the National University at Peking accords him a great reception on April 26. Dr. Hu Hsi, leader of the Chinese youth (now Chinese Ambassador at Washington), meets the poet and is converted into a great admirer of his, which reads on students in enthusiasm for his cultural mission; after giving a few more lectures in China goes to Japan (May 29, 1924); lectures there chiefly on "International Relations", in course of which he tells the Japanese of his "deep love and respect" for them as a people but deplores that "when as a nation you have dealings with other nations you also can be deceptive, cruel and efficient in handling those methods in which the Western nations show such mastery"; meets Rashbehary Bose, the exiled Indian revolutionary, who shows great reverence for the Poet and insists on attending to his personal comforts; returns to India on July, 21, 1924.

The Poet is drawn into the vortex of an agitation over a speech of Lord Lytton made at Dacca praising the police and casting a slur on the women of Bengal; accedes, under pressure from mutual friends, to the request to meet Lord Lytton and help him to explain himself, -Fazlul Huq being very active to bring about the meeting; letters of Lord Lytton and Tagore simultaneously published in Indian papers on August 23 fail to terminate the agitation; returning to Santiniketan writes a letter to Lord Lytton telling him that "a considerable number of my countrymen are ready to challenge your Government to produce trustworthy evidence in support of your statement"; takes part in a tableaux performance of *Anupratna* at Alfred Theatre, (Calcutta).

TO SOUTH AMERICA—Sails for South America, accompanied by Elmhirst, on September 19, 1924, accepting the invitation from Peru to attend the Centenary Celebration of her Independence; falls ill during the voyage; arrived at Buenos Ayres, is warmly received by Argentinians; due to ill health is prevented from going to Peru; rests at a beautiful garden-house at San Isadore as the guest of Madame Victoria Ocampo writing the poems of *Parabi*, which he dedicates to her ('Vijaya'); takes leave of the President of the Argentine Republic on December 30, 1924.

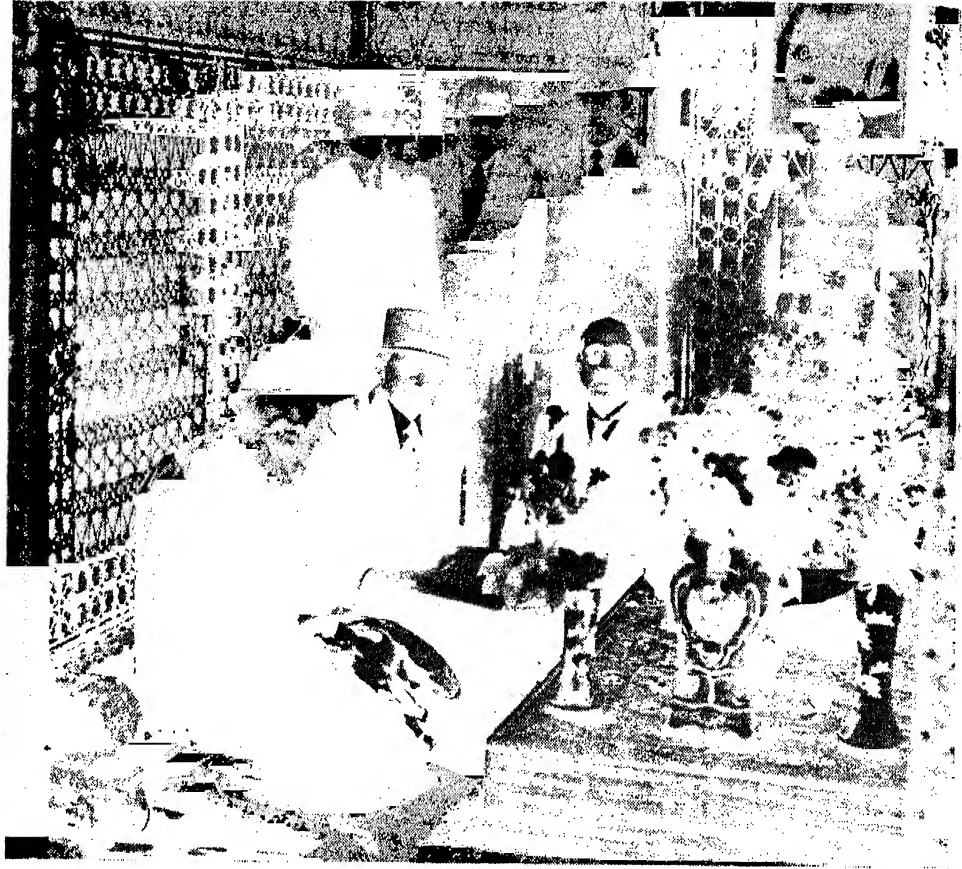
1925-1930
AGE 64-69

On January 4, 1925, boards an Italian boat for Europe; arrives at Genoa (Jan. 21); at Milan at a great meeting, presided over by the Duke of Milan, gives a long discourse on Music, receiving a remarkable ovation; sits for a portrait of him by the famous Italian Painter



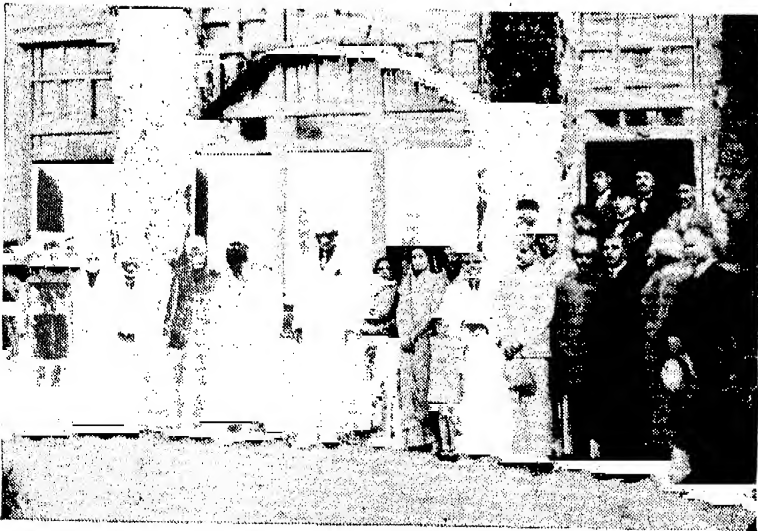
আমিগিতে

IN GERMANY



পারস্তে (পিছনে কেদারনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায়)

IN PERSIA



THE POET AT
SHADI'S TOMB

শেখ শাদীর কবরভূমিতে

Rietz proceeds to Venice on the 29th and is taken round the historic city with great honours; returns to India on the 17th February, 1925; his elder brother, Jyotindranath Tagore passes away at Ranchi on the 4th March, 1925; his 65th birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan; is visited by Gandhiji at Santiniketan (27th May); meets Bishop Fisher of America who comes to see him and Gandhiji; on the sudden death of C. R. Das (June 16, 1925), the Poet, in a four-line elegy, pays to the memory of the great leader a most remarkable and touching tribute; writes to explain his own attitude towards the cult of the *Charka* (the spinning-wheel) preached by Gandhiji; at the request of his friend, Count Keyserling, writes a paper on the subject of marriage which is published in the latter's famous "Book of Marriage"; attends the performance of *Chirakumar Sabha* (The Bachelors' Club) on the boards of the Star Theatre in Calcutta,—the Poet having re-shaped it for the stage; recasts for similar performances other plays, e.g., *Sodh-bodh* (All Squares) out of the story *Karmaphal* (Nemesis) published by H. Bose of Kuntalin in 1904; also produces the play *Sesh Raksha* (All's well that ends well) from the story which he shapes out of the drama *Goragad-galad* (Wrong at the Start) and *Griha-Prabesh* from the story *Shesher Ratri* (The Final Night); Sir P. C. Ray in a public speech criticises the Poet and Sri Brajendranath Seal for their staying out of the *Charka* campaign of Gandhiji; the Poet replies in an article in *Sabuj-patra* on *Swaraj Sadhan* (Working for Swaraj), definitely rejecting the *Charka* as a means of attaining *Swaraj*, in the same essay, records his views on the political tension, particularly with reference to Hindu-Muslim relation; writes to Romain Rolland a letter of felicitations on the occasion of his 60th birthday in the course of which he reiterates his views against the mechanisation of humanity by Western nations by their "fetish worship of materialistic nationalism"; Prof. Carlo Formichi followed by Prof. G. Tucci arrives from Italy (Nov. 21, 1925) with Mussolini's warmest tributes to the Poet and a gift of books for *Vitru-Bharati* which they join as professors; Lord Lytton visits Santiniketan (Nov. 24); on the 19th December, the Poet presides over the first session of the Indian Philosophical Congress in Calcutta; receives at Santiniketan, on January 12, 1926, P. S. Marvin, the celebrated American author, sent as a representative of the league of Nations; attends the session of the All-India Music Conference at Lucknow, where he receives the news of the death of his eldest brother, Dwijendranath, at Santiniketan (Jan. 18, 1926).

IN EAST BENGAL—Goes to Dacca on 7th February at the invitation of the University; receives addresses from the Dacca Municipality the Peoples Association and other bodies; speaks at several meetings and functions; also at Mymensingh; at Comilla presides over the anniversary celebrations of the *Abhaya Asram* of Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee; attends the Namasudra (Depressed Class) Conference; is warmly received at Agar-

tala by Maharaj Kumar Brajendrakishore of Tipperah; on his return to Santiniketan, his 65th Birthday (May 7, 1926) is celebrated by a gathering representative of many nations; the Maharaja of Porbandar sends a generous contribution for *Kalabhavan* (House of Arts) of Santiniketan; *Natir Puja* (The Dancing Girl's Worship) is staged for the first time at Santiniketan.

ITALY AND MUSSOLINI—Leaves Calcutta on May 12, 1926, on his eighth Foreign Tour accompanied by Rathindranath and Pratima Devi; reaches Naples on May 30 and proceeds to Rome by a special train arranged under express orders of Mussolini; declares himself "glad of this opportunity to see for myself the work of one who is assuredly a great man and a movement that will be certainly remembered in history"; meets Mussolini on May 31, when the Poet is received by the Duce with the remark: "I am an Italian admirer of yours, who has read every one of your books translated into the Italian language"; on June 7, the Governor of Rome holds a great public reception in his honour in the historic Capital and conveys to the Poet "the greetings of the Eternal City"; the British Ambassador holds another reception; the next day the Poet delivers a speech on "The Meaning of Art"; attends on the 10th afternoon the annual choral concert of the school children of Rome in the ancient Coliseum; is accorded a reception at Rome University; received by the King of Italy on June 11; attends a performance of *Chitra* in Italian after a second meeting with Mussolini on June 13, meets the great Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, who, exiled from Rome to Naples, is specially summoned by Mussolini to meet him; is received by the Leonardo da Vinci Society of Florence on the 16th; the next day at the University speaks on "My School"; at Turin, on June 20, reads an address on "City and Village" (published in the 5th Anniversary Number of *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* as: "Wedded Partners"); after the reading Signora Lipovetzka, a noted Italian songstress, gives three songs of Tagore; from Turin the Poet comes to Switzerland where he is met by numerous victims of Fascist oppression; is shown "coloured reports" of his statements in the Italian Press in praise of the Duce,—his utterances and opinions, torn from their context, presented in a different light altogether, arrives at Villeneuve, where he stays at Hotel Eyrone in the very room in which Victor Hugo had lived for a long time overlooking the lake, with the Castle of Chillon in the background; here he is warmly received by Romain Rolland and meets Georges Duhamel, J. G. Frazer Prof. Forel, Prof. Bovet and others; at Zurich (July 6) he meets the wife of Prof. Salvadori, a distinguished Italian exiled by Mussolini, who gives him a first-hand account of Fascist atrocities witnessed by herself; writes a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in which the Poet expresses himself strongly against Fascism of which Mussolini was the High Priest; Prof. Formichi from Italy writes a letter of protest to the *Guardian*, saying that as the constant companion and interpreter of Tagore in Italy

he (Formichi) denied that Tagore had ever criticised Mussolini the Poet replies that "for *some time* I felt almost elated with the idea that an object lesson was being offered by Italy to show that ample room could be made for human personality in the heart of a political machine...."; after a day's stay at Lausanne, arrives in Vienna on July 10; here he meets Dr. Angelica Balbanoff the well known Socialist leader, who brings with him Sig. Modigliani, the prosecuting counsel at the trial of the murderers of Matteotti, the anti Fascist Italian member of the Chamber of Deputies.

A "CONQUERING HERO"—In the beginning of August, accompanied by Prof. and Mrs. Mahalanobis, who had joined him in Italy, the Poet comes to England; sits to Epstein for a bust of his; meets Brailsford, Rothenstein, Robert Bridges (the Poet-Laureate) and a few other intellectuals; leaves (with Lord Sinha and Prof. and Mrs. Mahalanobis) on the 21st August, 1926, for Norway; is received by the King of Norway at Oslo; meets at Stockholm Nansen, Sven Hedin, Bjornsen, Johan Bojer; goes to Copenhagen, where he meets the philosopher Hoffding and the famous literary critic George Brandes; proceeds to Germany and arrives at Hamburg (Sept. 10); next day comes to Berlin and speaks (Sept. 13) at the Philharmonic Hall on "Indian Philosophies"; is received by President Von Hindenburg on the 14th; is entertained by Kurt Wolfe, his publisher; writes from Berlin to the *Manchester Guardian* that although he had admiration for the personality of Mussolini, he could never lend his support to Fascism; is attacked and abused by *Popolo d'Italia* visits Dresden and Cologne on a lecture tour; comes back to Berlin and leaves for Czecho-Slovakia; at Prague delivers lectures on "Art Forms" "Civilisation and Progress" (October 10-15); flies to Vienna in an aeroplane placed at his disposal by the Czech Government and receives a great ovation; composes the first poem of the *Vanavani* (Voice of the Forest) series; lectures at Budapest on the 26th; here he plants a tree near the statue of the famous Hungarian poet Sandor Kisfaludy and places a wreath at the memorial of the distinguished Hungarian novelist Maurice Jokai; stays at Balaton Feurd and inscribes the poems for *Lekhan*; lectures at the University of Belgrade; is received by King Boris at Sofia (Bulgaria); by King Ferdinand at Bukharest (Rumania); arrives at Athens on November 25, where the Greek King makes him a "Commander of the Order of the Redeemer"; from Greece goes via Turkey to Egypt, reaching Alexandria on November 27 and Cairo on December 1; a meeting of the Egyptian Parliament is adjourned in his honour and the Ministers meet him at a party where he is entertained to Arabic music; King Fuad receives him and presents him with a collection of Arabian books for the Visva-Bharati; sails from Alexandria for India concluding his "great tour of conquest not as a tyrant but as a teacher—the bearer of a new message of synthesis and harmony, culture and enlightenment."

"NATIR PUJA" AND "NATARAJ"—Comes back to India, and receives on arrival in Calcutta at Howrah Station, a great ovation, J. M. Sen-Gupta the Mayor of Calcutta receiving him at the head of a large body of citizens; goes to Santiniketan on December 19, 1926; the murder of Swami Sradhananda at Delhi, in the Christmas week, on the eve of the Indian National Congress at Gauhati, greatly shocks the Poet, who speaking to a gathering at Santiniketan, avers that it is the very helplessness of the weakling that tempts the strong to deeds of sin and crime and appeals for mutual understanding and goodwill; on Jan. 24, 1927 in Calcutta, is staged *Natir Puja*. The Poet appearing in the role of the Buddhist monk; issues on February 3, a remarkable statement protesting against "the primitive form of despotisms", which detained young men without trial under Bengal Ordinances; does not approve of the agitation against the Government's proscribing some Bengali books, reminding the writers that there was nothing many in voicing lachrymose protest on the comfortable assumption that the Government when attacked would not retaliate; devotes himself to creating songs expressible in the form of dances and on March 18, 1927, produce at Santiniketan, his *Nataraja*, a new type of dance drama; contributes a poem, *Vichitra*, to the first number of a new Bengalee periodical of the same name, sponsored by Upendranath Ganguli (Editor, Jatinath Ghosh, Kanti Ghosh, Satis Ghatak and Amal Home); the *Vichitra* also publishes *Nataraja* illustrated by Nanda Lal Bose; fills the new magazine with various contributions from month to month; presides over the Hindi Literary Conference on the invitation of the Maharaja of Bharatpore; visits Jaipur, Agra and Ahmedabad and is feted by the Gujrat Literary Society; returns to Santiniketan on April 11; lays the foundation stone of prayer hall of the Prabartak Sangha at Chandernagore and receives a purse from the Mayor of Chandernagore; goes to Shillong and commences writing for the *Vichitra* a novel under the title *Tin-purush* (Three Generations), which he later re-names *Yoga-Yog* ('Contacts').

IN "GREATER INDIA"—On July 12, 1927, leaves for a tour in Malaya, Java, Bali and Siam (now Thailand), accompanied by Sunitikumar Chatterjee Surendra Nath Kar and others (his ninth Foreign Tour, financed partially by J. K. Birla, who donated Rs. 10,000); arrives at Singapore on the 20th July and lectures on "The Unity of Man", Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor, presiding, after many social functions leaves for Malacca on the 27th; following an untiring round of lectures at various stations, arrives at Penang from where he proceeds to Sumatra; arrives in Batavia on August 22 and reads at a banquet in his honour a poem, "The Indian Pilgrim to Java", an English rendering of his Bengali poem *Vijaya Lakshmi*, which he had composed on the 21st; on the 23rd leaves for Bali; writes on board the steamer an essay, *Sahitye Navatwa* (Novelty in Literature), which reflects his reaction against report of a controversy then current in Bengal over his latest

terary essay, "Sahitya-Dharma", which he had contributed to the *Vichitra* just before his departure, criticising the ultra-modern tendencies in Bengali fiction; arrives at Bali on August 24; describes the natural beauty of the island in a poem, *Sagarika* (published later in *Jaloca*); tours through the island with royal honours; particularly impressed with Balinese dance-dramas; on Bali, on September 9, he reaches Sourabaya (Java); on the 12th comes to Soetakarta where he opens a bridge and a street which is named after him; visits the great temple of Borobudur; leaves for Siam via Bandung and Batavia; is warmly received by the King and Queen, also the Prince of Chantabun, a great Pali scholar.

Returns home on October 27; rewrites his play, *Ataraja*, and produces it, under the name of and produces it, under the name of *Rituranga*, in Calcutta on December 8, 1927; McMillan & Co., publish "Fireflies" and "Letters to a Friend"; on January 5, 1928, receives at Santiniketan members of the Indian Science Congress; so receives the great singer Dame Clara Butt; V. Dasgupta, Professor of Sanskrit at the German University at Prague (Czecho-Slovakia), comes to Visva-Bharati as Visiting Professor in succession to Prof. William Winternitz; writes in *Prabasi* and the *Modern Critic* on the conflict between the staff and students of the City College over Saraswati Puja celebration, appreciating the demand of the latter to perform the worship against the established traditions of the College (a Brahmo institution); attends, as President, a meeting at his Calcutta residence, arranged to settle the acute differences between two sections of Bengali literateurs; the ultra-modern tendencies in literature; his sixty-fifth birthday is celebrated in Calcutta (May 7, 1928) the Poet being weighed against his own books which are then given away to public libraries, the ceremony following the traditional Indian custom (*tula-dan*) of new things being similarly weighed against gold, which used to be given away to the deserving poor.

TO SRI AUROBINDO On May 12, 1928 the Poet leaves Calcutta for England to deliver the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford but falls ill at Madras and cancels the voyage; spends a restful week at Adyar accepting Mr. Besant's invitation; proceeds from Madras to Colombo halting en route at Pondicherry to pay, on May 29, a visit to Sri Aurobindo; records his impression of the visit in *Modern Review*, visits Ceylon and comes to Bangalore on the way back at the invitation of Mr. Brajendranath Seal, then Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University; here he concludes his novel *Sesher Kabita* (The Last Poem); returns to Santiniketan at the end of June; in August, 1928, takes part in Calcutta the Centenary of the Brahmo Samaj preaching a sermon from the pulpit of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj on the 'Message of Rammohun Roy'; sends a written speech to be read at the Conference of All-India Libraries Association, held in Calcutta during Christmas; Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) the Viceroy of India, visits Santiniketan on December 17; writes and publishes the poems

of Mahua; the Poet presides at the Parliament of Religions held in Calcutta on January 28, 1929.

IN CANADA—Invited by the National Council of Education of Canada to participate at its Triennial Conference, leaves Calcutta, on February 26, 1929, accompanied by A. K. Chanda and Sudhindra Dutta; reaches Tokyo (March 26) where he stays for two days as the guest of the famous Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shinbun*; arrives at Vancouver on April 6 and delivers at the Conference his famous lecture on "The Philosophy of Leisure"; next day speaks there on "The Principles of Literature"; visits the Sikh shrine at Vancouver on April 12, and on April 14 delivers his farewell speech in Canada; invited by the Universities of Harvard, Columbia, California and Detroit he reaches Los Angeles on April 18, and, following the loss of his passport, experiences at the hands of the Emigration Officers the "special treatment" accorded to "a representative of the Asiatic peoples, an Oriental and a Coloured man"; as a protest he cancels his American tour and embarks for Japan on April 20; his birthday is celebrated on board the Japanese boat by the Captain and passengers; reaches Yokohama on May 10; lectures at Tokyo on "Oriental Culture and Japan's Mission"; fondly hoping that "Japan.....will reveal an aspect of civilisation which is generally ignored in other parts of the world...it should be greatly rich in the wealth of human relationship even in politics", is entertained by Marquis Okuma; leaves for India on June 8; an route is received cordially in Indo-China by the French Government and the people arrives in Madras on July 3, and Calcutta on July 5, 1929.

In September, 1929, the Poet delivers two lectures, *Sahityer Swarnap* and *Sahityer Bichar* under the auspices of the "*Rabindra-Parichaya Sabha* (Tagore Society) of the Presidency College recasts his old drama *Raja-O-Rani* as *Tapali*, which is staged at his Calcutta residence consecutively on 26th, 28th, 29th September and 1st October.....the old Poet appearing in the role of the Young King Vikram; Prof. Takagaki, a famous exponent of the art of *Jujitsu*, comes to Santiniketan at Tagore's invitation, the Poet having felt that Bengalee boys and girls stood in great need of training in this art of self-defence; takes seriously to painting to which he devotes much time; at the invitation of the Gackwar, lectures at Baroda (January 26, 1930) on "Man the Artist"; detained unavoidably in the way, fails to attend.....much to the chagrin of organisers and disappointment of the delegates,— the nineteenth session of the Bengali Literary Conference of which he was President elect), his elder sister, Swarnakumari Devi, taking the presidential chair at the last moment (Feb. 2, 1930); on February 10, at Surul, Sir Stanley Jackson, the Governor of Bengal, opens a Conference of the workers of Co-operative Societies and announces a capital grant for Sriniketan of Rs. 5,000 only and a yearly grant of Rs. 1,000 for three years only, the insufficiency of the grant adding to the adverse public criticism.

EMERGENCE AS A PAINTER—On March 2, 1930, Rabindranath proceeds from Calcutta on his Eleventh Foreign Tour accompanied by his son, daughter-in-law and W. Ariam (Private Secretary) ; reaching Marseilles on the 26th, stays at Cap Martin near Monte Carlo as the guest of M. Kahn ; meets here President Masaryk of Czecho-Slovakia ; opens an exhibition of his own pictures in Paris at the Galerie Pigalle (arranged by his Argentine friend Madame Victoria O'Campo) on May 2, with 125 exhibits ; his sixty-ninth birthday is celebrated in Paris ; goes to London on May 11 and then to Birmingham where he receives the news of the happenings in India (Gandhiji's salt *Satyagraha*, the Dandi March, his arrest and internment, the armoury raid at Chittagong Martial Law at Sholapur, Viceregal Ordinances declaring the Congress as an illegal body, the Hindu-Muslim riots at Dacca) which impel him to declare in an interview with the *Manchester Guardian* (May 16) against the repressive measures by the "Bureaucratic irresponsible Government meting out cruel and arbitrary punishment to entirely inoffensive persons.... in the high-sounding name of law and order" and pleads for concerted action by the best minds of East and West as "the present complications cannot be dissipated by repression and a violent display of physical power" ; comes to Oxford on the 17th and on the 19th, at Manchester College, delivers his first Hibbert Lecture (later published by Allen & Unwin as "Religion of Man") ; returns to London to discuss Indian affairs with Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India ; addressed an annual meeting of Quakers, being the first speaker not belonging to that community invited to address such a meeting within 252 years past ; is heckled at the conclusion of his address for his remarks against British rule in India and replies : "Realize yourselves in our place and recall the time when your own brothers in America wanted to secure their freedom with their blood" ; returning to Oxford delivers his concluding speech (Hibbert Lectures) on the 26th, the Chapel of Manchester College, to one of the most crowded audiences ever seen there..... the Principal of the University College, Sir Michael Sadler, declaring ; "We shall never forget in Oxford the gift you have given us and the inspiration you have brought to us" ; returning to Birmingham, speaks there on the 'Ideals of Education in East and West' ; attends an exhibition of his paintings on June 2 ; writes a letter to the *Spectator* (June 7) on the political situation in India paying a remarkable tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his "new technique of revolution" ; visits Elmhirst's school, Dartington Hall, at Totnes (Devonshire).

Proceeds to Germany, reaching Berlin on July 11, 1930 ; meets the members of the Reichstag on the 12th ; meets Einstein on the 14th ; after the opening of an Exhibition of his paintings, at Gallery Moller, on July 16th, proceeds to Dresden ; next to Munich, where a civic reception is accorded to him at the ancient Town Hall ; witnesses the famous "Passion Play" at Obereunmmergan, which impresses him deeply ; after a rapid tour through many cities, "travelling like royalty", goes

to Denmark ; an Exhibition of his paintings is opened at Copenhagen on August 9 ; goes to Geneva and spends there a few days ; hears there of communal riots at Dacca and writes to the *Spectator* (Aug. 30, 1930) complaining bitterly against the silence maintained by English newspapers over the affair and maintaining that "men of vicious character have been brought in at Dacca" and "unspeakable atrocities have occurred."

IN SOVIET RUSSIA—Leaves Geneva to visit Russia accompanied by Soumendra Tagore (his grand-nephew) and Aniya Chakraverti (his Literary Secretary) ; Dr. Harry Timbers (his Private Secretary) ; arrives at Moscow on September 11, 1930 ; received at the White-Russian Baltic Station by the representatives of the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) ; next day, at Voks Building, a reception is held, Prof. F. N. Petroff, the President of the Society, taking the chair ; on the evening of the same day a concert is arranged in his honour jointly by the VOKS and the Moscow Association of writers at their Club, where he meets Prof. Kogan (President of the Academy of Arts), Prof. Pinkevitch (Director of the Second Moscow State University) Mme. Litvinov, Mme Ognied, Essey and other Soviet artists and authors ; visits the Pioneers' Commune (the organisation for giving vocational training to orphans) on the 14th ; the Peasants' Home on the 16th ; an Exhibition of his paintings opened, on September 17, at the State Moscow Museum of New Western Art, is welcomed by Soviet art critics as "a very great event in the history of art" ; visits Moscow Art Theatre and witness the performances of "Peter the Great", Tolstoy's "Resurrection", and "Biaderka" (an Indian love legend) at the First State Opera House ; meets students and tells them of his own school in India ; visits the Industrial Labourers Commune, Central Ethnographical State Museum, the Children's Crecche and Kindergarten of the Moscow Dynamo Works, the Museum of Handicrafts, the Museum of Revolution and several other institutions delivers his farewell speech at a high reception organised in the Central House of Trade Unions on September 23, when the Soviet poet Shingalee recites the "Ode to Rabindranath", specially composed for the occasion, and the author Galperian recites in Russian three of Tagore poems and the actor Simonov "Stages select scenes from "Post-Office" (*Dak-Ghar*).

Leaves Russia on the 25th for Germany, and from there sails for America on October 3, 1930 ; writes to the *Spectator* (November 19) from America a letter deploring Gandhiji's hesitation to participate at the Round Table Conference, which, in the Poet's opinion, "could have been used as a platform wherefrom to send his voice to all those over the world who truly represent the future history of man" ; on November 25, at the Biltmore Hotel (New York), attends a great public banquet organized in his honour by four hundred leading citizens ; is received by President Hoover ; delivers a public address at Carnegie Hall (New York) on December 1, and on Dec. 7, speaks on "The First and Last Prophet of Persia" at a meeting

under the auspices of the Bahais ; accepts the offer of Ruth St. Denis, the celebrated dancer, of raising funds through a few dance-recitals by her of his poems but gives away the money thus received to be spent in giving relief to the unemployment at New York ; exhibitions of his paintings are opened at Boston and New York and received by many art-critics with enthusiasm ; meets Will Durant, whose book "The Case for India" had been prohibited entry into Bengal ; returns to England on December 22 ; declines to accept the invitation to act as a mediator in the Round Table Conference wrangle over the communal question ; is entertained by the Editor of the *Spectator* at a luncheon at Hyde Park Hotel (January 8, 1931), where he meets and have a long talk with George Bernard Shaw ; comes back home in February, 1931.

1931-1935 Returning to India writes a
Age 70-74 new dance-drama, *Nabin*, which is staged first at Santiniketan and then in Calcutta (Empire Theatre) March 14), the Poet reciting poems which are interpreted and visualised through dance and music ; his seventieth birthday is celebrated at Santiniketan and also at many places all over India ; his Letters from Russia—*Russian Chithi*—are collected and published on his seventieth birthday, revealing the "profound spiritual and poetic insight and the deep social consciousness with which he had closely followed the most important page of human history".

"RABINDRA-JAYANTI"—On the 16th May, 1931, at the Calcutta University Institute Hall a large gathering representative of all sections of the community with Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Sastri (President, *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*) in the chair, conveys to the Poet its warmest felicitations on his completing the seventieth year of his life and decides to celebrate the occasion in a fitting manner in Calcutta,—thus inaugurating RABINDRA-JAYANTI. A Tagore Septuagenary Celebrations Committee is appointed with the Poet's life-long friend the great scientist Jagadis C. Bose as President, Jatindranath Basu as General Secretary and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and Amal Home as Joint Secretaries. On the 18th July, 1931 this Committee adopts a Scheme of Celebration, prepared by Amal Home, deciding to celebrate the event by a festival extending over an entire week during Christmas (1931) devoted to the observance of a comprehensive programme bringing out and emphasising the Poet's life-work ; sends a poem of greetings to the youths of the Buxa Concentration Camp, detained under Viceregal Ordinance, in reply to their birthday felicitations ; the poem is returned by the Censor to Amal Home, who had forwarded it on behalf of the Poet.

THE HILJI PROTEST—The Poet visits Bhopal at the invitation of the Nawab ; terrible floods, famine and pestilence devastate North Bengal to which is added acute communal trouble between Hindus and Muslims, on

which he writes in the *Prabasi*, warning his countrymen against such fatal fratricide helping "the third party" in keeping India under perpetual political domination ; on the 24th, 25th, 27th and 28th September is produced in Calcutta a novel musical festival, *Sisutirtha* (The Child) in aid of the flood-stricken in North Bengal ; on September 30 the Sanskrit College in Calcutta confers on the Poet the title of *Kabi-Sarbabhouma* ; on the 13th October, when he is contemplating a trip to Darjeeling to recoup his health, occurs the tragedy at the Hijli Detention Camp, where the guards shoot two young Bengali prisoners dead and wound a large number ; the Poet again comes to the fore and becomes the spear-head of outraged public protest at a meeting which convened to be held at the Town Hall is transferred, owing to unprecedented crowd, to the foot of the Ochterloney Monument in the Calcutta *Maidan* ; he condemns "the concerted homicidal attack, under cover of darkness, on defenceless prisoners undergoing the most barbaric system of incarceration and a nerve-racking strain of an indefinitely suspended fate" ; trounces in a letter to the daily press an Anglo-Indian paper "giving repeated expressions of the Christian sentiment of sympathy for the warders who had murdered the prisoners in their charge" ; spends the autumn at Darjeeling ; lends his support in an essay on "The Weavers of Bengal" to the movement set on foot by Sir P. C. Ray that Bengal should not depend on Bombay mills to clothe herself ; celebrates at Santiniketan the 50th birth anniversary of Nandalal Bose, the artist.

"RABINDRA-JAYANTI" CELEBRATED—Comes to Calcutta on the 23rd December, 1931, to attend the RABINDRA-JAYANTI celebrations held in the Christmas week in pursuance of the resolution adopted at the inaugural meeting of the 18th May, 1931.—The *Jayanti* Week starts in the morning of the 25th December with the opening of a remarkable arts and crafts exhibition and a *mela (fair)* at the Town Hall and the adjoining grounds by the Maharaja Bahadur of Tipperah,—the Poet being himself present and going round the rooms and galleries exhibiting (i) a hundred of his own drawings and painting, (ii) manuscripts and different editions of his works—English and Bengali, (iii) translations of his works in different languages of the world, (iv) works on himself, (v) portraits, etc., of the Poet at different periods of his life, (vi) gifts and presents to the Poet from different countries of the world, (vii) arts and crafts products of the Visva-Bharati (viii) old and new Bengali art products and artistic home industries and (ix) pictures of the Bengal School of Painting and Indian paintings, old and new.—As a back-ground to the exhibition (organised by Kedarnath Chatterjee assisted by Surendranath Kar) is also held a *mela (fair)* with stalls of indigenous products, and entertainments, e.g., *Kathakata, jatra, Kirtan, baul*, folk songs and folk dances, sports and athletics.—The same afternoon sits a literary conference under the presidentship of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, where papers, written by well-known Bengali literateurs dealing

with different aspects of Rabindranath's contribution to the Bengali literature and some poems dedicated to the Poet are read.—The evening is held a Music Festival where thirty-five Tagore songs (beginning from the earliest period of his composition) are sung by well-known singers and a well-trained choir under the leadership of Indira Devi and Dinendra Nath Tagore.—The next day, the 26th December, Sir S. Radhakrishnan opens and presides over a conference at which distinguished literateurs, artists, scholars and educationists, Indian and European, from all parts of India, including special delegates deputed by the different universities, read papers dealing with Rabindranath's contributions to practically all departments of human culture.—In the evening is continued the Music Festival with thirty-five more songs from Tagore.

FELICITATIONS—On the 27th December, 1931, before an assemblage of several thousands of people representing all sections of the community gathered in front of the Town Hall (where on the street, facing the steps of the historic building, a dais has been erected, the Poet is presented with addresses of felicitations on behalf of the Corporation of Calcutta (read by the Mayor Dr. B. C. Roy), the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* (read by its President Sir P. C. Ray), the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* (read by Ambika Prasad Bajpai), the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammelan* (read by Pratiba Devi of Allahabad) and last, on behalf of his countrymen, by the *Rabindra Jaganti-Parishad* (The Tagore Septuagenary Celebration Committee) which was read by the greatest Bengali poetess Kamini Ray, the address itself being written by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the famous Bengali novelist.—The Poet replies to all the addresses separately, receiving a remarkable ovation at the end.—He is also presented with *The Golden Book of Tagore*—bearing the homage of poets and authors, artists and scientists, politicians and statesmen of thirty countries—By Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee (who had edited the Book) on behalf of the Publication Committee.—On the 28th, 29th and 30th is staged *Natir Paja* at the Jorasanko house of the Poet, he himself appearing in the role of the Buddhist monk.—The *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* holds a reception on the 29th December, when a marble bas-relief portrait of the Poet, presented by Amal Home, is unveiled by Sir P. C. Ray, President of the Parishad.

The students of Calcutta also celebrate the occasion by presenting the Poet with an address, on the 31st December at the Senate Hall of the University of Calcutta; to this he replies by reading a paper in Bengali, dwelling on the growth of his poetic life, which he had originally prepared for reading at the public reception on the 27th December of its length and the cosmopolitan character of the gathering.—The **RABINDRA JAYANTI** celebration, which was to be held for a week from the 25th to the 31st December, 1931 is extended till the 5th January, 1932, when at the news of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose and other leaders and the arrest of Jnananjan Neogi,

the Secretary of the *Jaganti-Mela*, the Celebration Committee, in view of the political situation, comes to a decision to close the function.

The Poet is greatly agitated over Gandhiji's arrest and cables to the British Prime Minister protesting against "the sensational policy of indiscriminate repression being followed by the Indian Government,.... causing permanent alienation of our people from yours"; issues a statement on the "Independence Day" (January 26, 1932), which, however, is prevented from being fully published by the Bengal Censor; writes many poems at his river-side residence of Khardah, among them being a notable one on Gandhiji entitled *Prasna* (The Question) published first in the *Prabasi* and later in his *Parishesh*; attends the opening of exhibition of his paintings arranged by Mukul Dey at the Government Art School, Calcutta, in February; takes a trial flight in a Dutch aeroplane and decides to fly to Persia in response to the invitation of the Shah; meets at Santiniketan a delegation of the "Society of Friends from England."

THE ROSES OF IRAN—On April 11, 1932, accompanied by his daughter-in-law "takes off" at the Dum Dum aerodrome on a K.L.M. plane, preceded by his two other companions—Kedarnath Chatterjee and Amiya Chakraverti; on crossing the Persian border receives in the plane wireless message from the Government of Persia welcoming him; is received at Bushire on April 13 by the Governor and entertained at a public banquet; is royally received at Shiraza (April 16) where he spends a few days; pays his respects at the tomb of Hafiz; comes to Ispahan on the 23rd via the ancient city of Persepolis; after a Civic Reception at Ispahan, goes to Teheran where he spends two weeks amidst a glorious round of civic, diplomatic and private receptions; on May 2 is received by His Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi to whom the Poet presents a poem written in his honour; at the Shah's orders his seventy-second birthday is celebrated with great éclat; receives invitation from Iraq and on the way back to India meets King Faisal at Baghdad, where he is accorded a Civic Reception; returns to Calcutta, by air, on June 3, 1932.

ACADEMIC HONOURS—Accepts the invitation of Calcutta University to take the Ramtanu Lahiri Chair of Bengali Literature and also deliver the Kamal Lectures; is presented with an Address from the University at a special Academic Reception on August 6, 1932; receives the news (Aug. 8) of the death in Germany of his only grandson, Nitindranath Ganguly; invited by C. Y. Chinamani of the *Leader* (Allahabad) to give his opinion on the Communal Award, advises his countrymen "to take advantage of the new feeling of resentment that is sweeping intellectual circles in our country to-day against irrational communal and class differences, come to agreement between ourselves and thus remove the greatest obstacles in the path of our national self-expression"; writes at Santiniketan the prose-poems of *Panascha* ('Post-script') the poems of *Parishesh* ('The March of Time'),

which he dedicates to Sarat Chandra Chatterjee on his 55th birthday anniversary.

GANDHIJI'S "FAST UNTO DEATH"—Greatly perturbed at the news of Gandhiji's resorting to his "fast unto death" (September 20, 1932) in protest against the sinister motives behind the Communal Award cancels arrangements for attending as President of the forthcoming birthday celebration of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, and, after issuing a fervent public appeal for removal of caste prejudices and differential treatment between Hindus socially, rushes to Poona (Sept. 24) where Gandhiji has been lying at Yervada Jail; sends an appealing cable to Premier Ramsay Macdonald; on Sept. 26 the news is received of the "Pact", arrived at as a result of Gandhiji's fast, being accepted by the Premier; Gandhiji breaks his fast, the Poet singing by his bed-side one of his favourite songs; writes to the Zamorin a forceful letter on the question of the temple entry of Harijans in Cochin; receives Pandit Madan Malavia at Santiniketan on December 2, 1932.

RAMMOHUN CENTENARY—Presides in Calcutta (December 11) at the Seventieth Birthday Celebration of Sir P. C. Ray and dedicates to him the brochure, "Mahatma and Depressed Humanity"; visits the Gosaba Village Welfare Centre established by Sir Daniel Hamilton in the Sundarbans; receives Professor Pure-Daud who has been sent to Santiniketan by the Shah of Persia; delivers at Calcutta University the second Kamala Lecture (January, 1933); on January 18 presides over the inaugural meeting of the Rammohun Centenary at the Senate Hall, Calcutta; on the 25th reads at Calcutta University a paper on "Fusion of Knowledge"; at Lucknow, on the occasion of a Conference organised by the School of Music (Feb. 1933), his daughter-in-law produces, with a batch of students from Santiniketan, a Dance-drama, *Sapnochan*, with great success; the performance is repeated in Calcutta, at the Empire Theatre (March, 1933).

Issues a statement to the Press supporting V. J. Patel's efforts to check the "campaign of lies" against India, then being sedulously carried on in Western countries (April, 1933) goes to Darjeeling; sends a telegram to Gandhiji deprecating his intention to enter into a second period of fasting, but the telegram is not received by Gandhiji; is the first to sign a leader's memorial to the Government to release political prisoners; also telegrams to prisoners on hunger-strike at Andamans to resist; records his own and the country's deepest distress at the news of the sudden death of J. M. Sen-Gupta (July 24, 1933) while under detention; sends a message on the occasion of Wilberforce Centenary celebrations to Hull; receives Uday Sankar at Santiniketan; on September 12, stages at the Madan Theatre in Calcutta *Tasher Desh* ("The Kingdom of Cards"), also giving recitals from *Chaandalika* ("The Untouchable's Daughter"); speaks on Rhythm (*Chhanda*) at Calcutta University (Sept. 16); publishes the poems of *Vichitra*

(illustrated) and dedicates the book to Nandalal Bose on his birthday.

Visits Bombay (Nov. 1933) with Santiniketan artistes for the "Tagore Drama Week" (organized there by the noted Calcutta Impresario, Haren Ghosh); Mrs. Sarojini Naidu personally looks after arrangements for his stay and his programme in Bombay; performances of his *Sapnochan* and *Tasher Desh* are given by the pupils of Santiniketan, the Poet himself appearing on the stage; exhibitions of his own paintings and those of other artists attached to the "Kalabhavan" of the Visva Bharati are opened in Bombay and widely appreciated; the Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University entertains the Poet at a dinner; delivers a lecture on "The Challenge of Judgment" and another on 'The Price of Freedom' (Dec. 1); goes to Waltair and delivers at Andhra University Sir Krishnaswami Aiyer lectures (Dec. 8, 9, 10), published later as "Man"; proceeds to Hyderabad (Dec. 12) where H.E.H. The Nizam who had some years ago made a gift of a lakh of rupees to the Visva-Bharati for a Chair of Islamic Culture warmly receives him and gives another twenty-five thousand rupees; the Osmania University entertains him at a garden party and the Prime Minister at a State Banquet; returns to Calcutta, and on Dec. 29 delivers his famous address *Bharat-Pathik Rammohun* at the Senate Hall on the occasion of Rammohun Centenary celebrations; speaks also at the All-India Women's Conference at Town Hall; D. R. Jardine, England's Captain in the Test Match between England and India, calls at the Jorasanko house to pay his respects to the Poet, the drama *Bansari* and the novel *Dui-Bon* ('Two Sisters') are written and published during 1933.

Receives Mrs. Naidu at Santiniketan on January 3, 1934; protests against the message of the Mahatma on the Bihar Earthquake (attributing the calamity to "divine vengeance on the country for its sin of untouchability"); telegraphs to Charles Andrews in England about the earthquake and appeals to all nations for help; expresses himself strongly against the anti-Gandhi agitation then on foot in Bengal; presides in Calcutta at the Jubilee celebrations of the Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Co. Ltd., of which his nephew, Surendranath Tagore, was one of the founders; on April 7 speaks at the International Relations Club (founded under the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).

Proceeds to Ceylon on May 6, 1934, with Santiniketan artists; reaches Colombo on the 9th; is entertained on the following day at the Rotary Club from where his talk on Visva-Bharati is broadcast; on the 11th the Indian Mercantile Chamber of Ceylon presents him with an address on the 15th the Corporation of Colombo holds a reception in his honour; *Sapnochan* is staged for five nights at Colombo and then other plays; exhibition of paintings of his own and "Kalabhavan" artists also held; on the 17th gives a recital of his poems; on May 19, visits Pandura and christens an institution started there on the lines of Sriniketan as *Sri-Palli* comes to Kandy and completes there his novel *Char Adhyaya* (four Chapters) on

June 5; goes to North Ceylon and then returns via Madras to Santiniketan on June 28; on August 31 receives Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, who, on release from jail, comes to meet his son studying then at Santiniketan; publishes with Prof. Gilbert Murray two essays on international problems with special reference to the East and the West; opens in Calcutta the Basanti Cotton Mills, a Bengali concern; in October again visits Madras at the invitation of the Chief Minister of Madras, Raja of Bobbili on behalf of the citizens; on October 22 the Corporation of Madras presents an address at a civic reception; on the 24th October speaks on "Myself and the Bengal Renaissance" from 27 to 30 take place dramatic performances staged by Santiniketan artists and an exhibition held of Santiniketan arts and crafts; the Governor of Madras Sri George Tenley receives the Poet at a garden party at Government House; visits Waltair on November 2 as the guest of the Maharani of Vizianagram and addresses the students of Andhra University on the 5th; return to Calcutta (Nov. 60); visits Benares to open a Montessori School for the Hindu University (Dec. 2); opens in Calcutta (Town Hall, Dec. 27, 1934) the *Prabasi Banga Sahitya Sammilan*; the novel *Malancha* is published; receives at Santiniketan members of the Indian Science Congress who come there on January 6, 1935.

A GOVERNOR'S VISIT—Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal; visits Santiniketan (Feb. 6, 1935); disgusted with the overzealous police "measures of safety" for His Excellency, the Poet has all the inmates of Santiniketan removed to Sriniketan for the period of the visit, the Governor going round the deserted Asram; the same evening the Poet leaves for Benares to attend the Convocation of the Hindu University which confers on him a Doctorate; speaks at the Allahabad University on the 12th; visits Lahore to preside over the Punjab Students' Conference; meets the leaders of the Sikh community who call on him and visits the Gurdwara; arrives at Lucknow on the 28th and addresses the students at the University on March 1 and 2; his 75th birthday is celebrated on May 7 at Santiniketan, the Poet entering his new residence, —the mud-hut '*Syamali*'; his poems of *Sesh-Saptaka* are also published on the same day; is felicitated by the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad* on May 12; speaks at the function organised by the Mahabodhi Society to observe the birthday of the Lord Buddha; spends the summer at Chandernagore, mostly on his house-boat; on the 21st July Dinendranath Tagore expires in Calcutta; in October *Saradotsav* is staged at Santiniketan with the Poet in the role of 'Sannyasi'; receives at Santiniketan the Japanese Poet, Noguchi (November 9) with whom, afterwards, he has a controversial exchange of letters on Japan's aggression in China; produces in Calcutta December 11 and 12 *Raja* in which he appears in the role of '*Thakurda*'; writes and publishes *Bithika* ('The Avenue a book of poems; on December 22, 1935 sends a message of felicitations to the

President of the Indian National Congress on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee.

1936-1941

Age 75-80

Reads a paper on "Education Naturalised", in February 1936 during the "Bengal Education Week" in Calcutta; on March 11, 13 and 14 at the New Empire Theatre in Calcutta, produces a new dance-drama *Chitrangada*; proceeds next on a North India tour (for collecting funds for Visva-Bharati) via Patna and Allahabad to Delhi; Gandhiji expostulates about the Poet thus exposing himself to such risks at his age, and an anonymous donor at Delhi, a disciple of the Mahatma donates, at his instance, Rs. 60,000 to the Visva-Bharati funds; the Delhi Municipality votes a civic address to the Poet which is vetoed by Government; the citizens of Delhi hold a public reception at the Queens Garden, when an address of welcome is presented to him; Princess Niloufar of Hyderabad entertains him at a lunch; visits Meerut where the Municipality and the District Board present him with addresses; returns to Santiniketan and marries his only granddaughter Nandita Ganguly to Krishan Kripalnni (April 25, 1936).

THE COMMUNAL AWARD—Presides (July 15) at a big meeting at the Town Hall to protest against the injustice done to Bengal Hindus under the Communal Award and signs the Hindu memorial to the British Premier against the Award; is criticised by a section of his countrymen for his being a signatory to a "petition", which is considered derogatory to his position—while another section holds that the Poet should not have mixed himself upon with the communal wrangle; the Poet, however, bases his protest against the Communal Award on larger national grounds; cancels, on account of ill health, his visit to Dacca for the Convocation of the Dacca University which confers on him the degree of D.Litt. *honoris causa*; on September 5, he sends a message to the World Peace Congress at Brussels, in course of which he warns the delegates: "We cannot have peace until we deserve it by paying its full price, which is,—that the strong must cease to be greedy and the weak must learn to be bold"; gives a discourse at the special service held at the Santiniketan *Mandir* on Gandhiji's birthday (October 2); on October 10-11, at the Ashutosh College Hall, Calcutta, another new dance-drama, *Parishodh*, is staged; on the 11th he attends the sixtieth birthday celebration of the novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and blesses him with an address of felicitations; speaks at Bengal Women's Workers' Conference (Oct. 12).

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION—On the 17th February, 1937 the Poet addresses the Convocation of the Calcutta University, the first non-official invited to speak at this academic function and to speak at it in Bengali; inaugurates the Bengali Literary Conference held at Chandernagore (Feb. 21); presides at the 'Parliament of Religions' (March 3) convoked in connec-



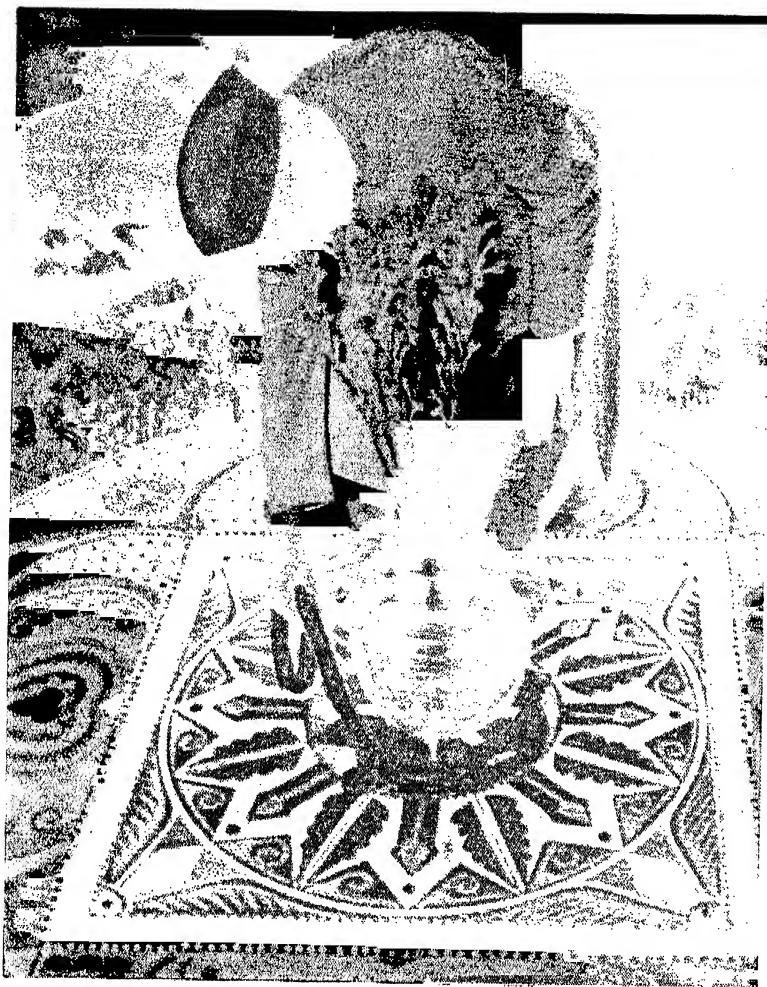
MRINALINI DEVI

মৃণালিনী দেবী

আজ তুমি আর নাই, দূর হতে গেছ তুমি দূরে,
বিধুর হয়েছে সন্ধ্যা মুছে যাওয়া তোমার সিল্পেরে,
সঙ্গীহীন এ জীবন শূন্য ঘরে হয়েছে ত্রীহীন,
সব মানি—সবচেয়ে মানি তুমি ছিলে একদিন ।

২ নভেম্বর, ১৯২৪

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



Homage to Gurudeva by
Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
(8th May, 1961)

জওহরলাল নেহরু কর্তৃক ৬মঃ
দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুর লেনের ভবনে
কবির স্মৃতির প্রতি প্রদাঞ্জলি।
(২৫শে বৈশাখ, ১৩৬৮)

tion with the Ramkrishna Centenary ; the "Chinese Hall" of the Visva-Bharati is opened at Santiniketan by the Chinese Consul in Calcutta on the Bengali New Year's Day (14th April, 1937) ; the seventy-seventh birthday of the Poet is observed at Santiniketan (May 7, 1937) ; spends a month at Almora, engaged in writing *Visva-perichaya*—an introduction to Science for Bengali readers ; spends part of July at Patisar his estate in North Bengal ; the title of *Kavisamrat* is conferred on him by Bharati-Tirtha of Andhra at a special convocation held on July 24 ; *Varshamangal* is staged in Calcutta (September 4 and 5) ; is taken seriously ill at Santiniketan on September 10, 1937 when his old friend and physician Sir Nilratan Sircar rushes to his bed-side with a devoted band of doctors and brings him back to health ; is brought to Calcutta (October) where Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and others then attending an A.I.C.C. meeting (which adopts a resolution of thanksgiving on his recovery) come to see him ; his lifelong friend, Jagadish Chunder Bose passes away on Nov. 23, 1937 ; sends a message to the New Education Fellowship Conference in Calcutta in December ; writes a number of poems during convalescence, which, are, later, published as *Prantik* ('At the End') ; Lord Lothian and later Lord and Lady Brabourne visit Santiniketan, January, 1938.

On March 1, 1938, the Osmania University confers its Hon. D.Litt. degree on the Poet *in absentia* ; on March 19, he attends the performance, in Calcutta, of *Chandalika* by the "Sangeet-bhawan" staff and students ; meets Gandhiji in Calcutta on March 22 ; at Santiniketan, the Poet's 78th Birth-day anniversary is observed for the first time not on May 7 but on April 14— the Bengali New Year's Day ; spends the summer at Kalimpong and Mungpoo, returning on July 5 to Santiniketan ; writes a popular treatise on Bengali language ; *Bangla Vasa Parichaya*, the poems of *Senjati* and dramatizes his story of *Muktir Upaya* (Means of Salvation) ; addresses the inmates of the Asram on Gandhiji's seventieth birthday ; on the 9th December, Marquess of Zetland, Secretary of State for India, opens an exhibition of his paintings at the Calmann Gallery in London ; Lady Lindlithgow and her daughter visit the Poet at Santiniketan.

'HINDI-BHAWAN' OPENED—On January 21, 1939, Subhas Bose, then President of the Indian National Congress, visits Santiniketan and is accorded a public reception ; on January 31 Jawaharlal Nehru opens "Hindi Bhawan" at Santiniketan ; on February 2, comes Subhas Bose again and then on the 6th, Rajendra Prasad ; *Shyama* and *Chandalika* are produced in Calcutta By Santiniketan artistes ; the Poet attending the performance ; his seventy-ninth birthday is observed at Santiniketan on the Bengali New Year's Day (April 14) ; invited by the Congress Government of Orissa, goes to Puri where his actual birth-day (May 7) is observed with great solemnity ; spends the summer at Mungpoo and Kalimpong ; performs, at the invitation of Subhas Chandra Bose, the opening ceremony of the "Mahajati

Sadan" in Calcutta (August 18) ; the next day Pandit Nehru visits the Poet at the Jorasanko house on his way to China ; addresses on December 15 a meeting at the Corporation Health Museum in connection with the opening of a Food and Nutrition Exhibition ; opens on December 16, 1939, the Vidyasagar Memorial Hall at Midnapore.

GANDHIJI'S VISIT—Gandhiji visits the Poet at Santiniketan (February 17-19, 1940) ; opens at Suri, the district headquarters of Birbhum (Feb. 21) the Industrial Exhibition held there annually ; in March goes to Bankura to lay the foundation stone of a Maternity Home and Child Welfare Centre ; on April 5, the Poet's most devoted friend C. F. Andrews (born 12th February, 1871) dies at a Nursing Home in Calcutta ; on April 14 (Bengali New Year Day) the Poet's 80th birth-day is quietly observed at Santiniketan ; spends the summer at Mungpoo.

OXFORD COMES TO VISVA-BHARATI—Oxford University holds a special Convocation at Santiniketan on Aug. 7, 1940, to confer on him a Doctorate of Literature, *honoris causa*—Sir Maurice Gwyer, Chief Justice of India, Sir S. Radhakrishnan and Mr. Justice Henderson of the Calcutta High Court representing Oxford at the function ; leaves for Kalimpong on September 19 ; is taken there seriously ill on September 27 and brought down to Calcutta on September 29 ; is placed here under the treatment of Dr. B. C. Roy, assisted by others ; they tide him over the period of acute illness and he is taken to Santiniketan on November 18 to convalesce after two months in bed in Calcutta ; received Tai Chi-Tao, President of the Examination Yuan, National Government of China, on December 9, 1940 ; though confined to bed the Poet's literary activity continues unabated,—at the books published during the year being *Nava-Jatak* ('The New Born') *Sanai* ('The Pipe') *Chhalebela* (My Boyhood Days) *Tin Sangi* (three short stories), *Roga-Sajjaya* ('In Sick-bed') and *Aragya* ('Convalescence').

EIGHTY FIRST BIRTHDAY—Rabindranath's eighty-first birth-day is observed at Santiniketan on the 1st Baishakh, 1348 B.S. (the Bengali New Year's Day corresponding to April 14, 1941, when he delivers a stirring address on *The Crisis in Civilisation*, which creates a profound impression all over India with its vigorous, bold and penetrating analysis of the causes of the ruin of "a proud civilization "...the civilization of Europe, on which he had once built his faith, the faith "that has gone bankrupt altogether to-day when I am about to quit the world."

RECURRENT ILLNESS—The Poet continues to be ill and is, more or less, confined to bed ; unable to hold the pen with ease, he dictates his poems and other writings ; on June 4, 1941 the Poet issues from his sick-bed a remarkable statement to the Press in reply to an open letter addressed to Indians by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, a member of Parliament, calling upon them to stand by

Britain in the War, which he describes as an "impertinent challenge to our conscience"; the statement creates a great sensation.

THE LAST DAYS

BROUGHT TO CALCUTTA—Towards the end of June, 1941, the Poet—who has never been able to recover from his illness in September 1940, when he was brought down from Kalimpong—has a serious setback; physical conditions begin steadily to decline causing anxiety; the doctors who had attended on him previously, are summoned to Santiniketan Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. L. M. Banerjee examine him and advise removal to Calcutta.

The Poet is brought down to Calcutta in the afternoon of Friday, the 25th July, 1941; doctors examine him again and decide on a surgical operation; the operation is performed by Dr. L. M. Banerjee in the morning of Wednesday, the 30th July; immediately before the operation at half-past nine, he dictates his last poem;

"তোমার সৃষ্টির পথ বেগেছে স্বাকীর্ণ করি" ('You have covered the path of your creation in a mesh of varied wiles, Thou Guileful One'); his condition is declared to be satisfactory in a bulletin issued from his house the same afternoon, and in the evening when the doctors examine him again, "everything was found to be in a satisfactory condition."

ANXIOUS DAYS—A Bulletin issued at 8-15 P.M. on Friday, the 1st August, 1941, informs an anxious public that "the Poet passed a disturbed night and is feeling some uneasiness"; the next day—Saturday, the 2nd August—a somewhat reassuring bulletin is issued at 12 noon about the Poet having passed "quieter night",—it being added that "His general condition shows improvement"; the same night, however, his condition changes; he passes a restless night though a slight improvement is noticed on Sunday, the 3rd August; "restlessness continues and he seems to have grown weaker", says a bulletin issued at 8-30 P.M. on Sunday,—it being added at the same time that "though there are reasons for some anxiety, his condition, however, is not alarming"; on Monday, the 4th August, the evening bulletin announces that the Poet "did not pass a very comfortable night", and "there has been a rise in the temperature since the afternoon."

On Tuesday, the 5th August, a bulletin issued at 8-10 P.M. says that "there has been some deterioration in the Poet's condition and there is cause for anxiety"; inquiries made by the Associated Press at 2 A.M. on Wednesday, the 6th August show "that there has been no improvement in the Poet's condition."

Throughout Wednesday the 6th August, the bulletins are a frequent intervals; at 11-20 A.M. it is stated that "his weakness and restlessness is causing great anxiety"; at 6 P.M. his condition has "worsened to some extent", at 7-30 P.M. it "has further worsened"; at 8-30 P.M., "his condition is causing grave anxiety"; through-

out the day and far into the night constant telephone calls are received at the Poet's residence, and a continuous stream of callers make personal enquiries about his condition; at 11-30 P.M. his condition shows "no change".

THE LAST HOURS—At 2-30 A.M. on Thursday, the 7th August his condition "is causing greater anxiety"; the last bulletin issued at 3-30 A.M. says that it has "slightly worsened since the last bulletin and is causing grave anxiety."

THE END COMES

With morning friends and relations being to gather at the Jorasanko House; the rooms overflows and a large crowd gathers outside the house; prayers are offered at the unconscious Poet's bed-side and hymns sung; at about 10, Dr. B. C. Roy and Dr. L. M. Banerjee come and examine him for the last time.

At thirteen minutes past twelve on Thursday, the 7th August, 1941 (corresponding to the 22nd Sraban, Bengali Era 1348 and Saka Era 1863). A great life peacefully comes to a close.

THE POET BREATHES HIS LAST

AGED 80 YEARS 3 MONTHS IN HIS ANCESTRAL HOME IN CALCUTTA—6, DWARKANATH TAGORE LANE—THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS BORN ON TUESDAY, May 7, 1861, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 2-30 AND 3 A.M.

IN THE MAJESTY OF DEATH—The news soon spreads all over the city, and people of all ranks and station in life, gather at the Poet's house; every section of the community is represented; a vast uncontrollable crowd fills the quadrangle and the courtyard; thousands throng the streets; schools and colleges, courts and offices, markets and mercantile firms are immediately closed; flags fly half-mast on public buildings; hundreds of men and women, young and old, file past the room where the Poet lies robed in silk decked with flowers—beautiful in death as in life.

THE LAST JOURNEY—The Funeral procession starts at about 3-30 P.M. goes along Chitpore Road, Vivekananda Road, Chittaranjan Avenue and Colootola Street where men stand ten deep and the balconies and house-tops on either side are filled with women; flowers are showered, rose-water is sprinkled on the bier as it proceeds with the precious burden; the procession arriving in College Street, in front of the Senate House, wreaths are offered by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of His Excellency the Chancellor, the University with its various departments, members of the Senate and Syndicate and many other academic bodies.

Another brief halt is made in front of the Prayer Hall of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj in Cornwallis Street, where prayers are offered and floral tributes placed on

the bier on behalf of this religious body of which he was the only Honorary Member; the procession then winds its way along Cornwallis Street, Gray Street, Butto Kisto Paul Avenue (Sovabazar) and Nimtolla Ghat Street to the cremation grounds, thousands of people lining up both sides of the route showering flowers on the bier; the cortege reaches the Burning Ghat as the sun sets.

A large crowd at Nimtollah makes it difficult for the bier to be taken to the site specially selected for the cremation outside the enclosure, right on the bank of the Jamnes; as the bier is placed on the ground there is a frenzied rush of people to touch it; the rush is so great that it considerably delays the funeral.

THE END OF IT ALL—The cremation ceremony starts shortly after 8 P.M. and concludes at midnight; the last rites are performed by Subir Tagore as laid down in the *Anusthan Paddhati* (code of ceremonies) by the Poet's father Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, the second great leader of the Brahmo Samaj; as the body is placed on the pyre, a hush falls on the vast concourse of people, while many touch the ground with their forehead in a gesture of reverence; the flames leap up; and so much beauty and fame, so much dignity and name are all consumed in the cleansing fire whose glory the Poet had sung in one of his memorable and magnificent songs.

The ashes are collected in a silver urn and taken to Santiniketan by the Poet's son the next morning.

*A ray of morning Sun strikes astant at the door
The assembled crowd feel in their blood the primal
chant of creation !
'Mother, open the gate !'
The gate opens,
The mother is seated on a straw bed with the babe
on her lap,
Like the dawn with the morning star
The Sun's ray that was waiting at the door outside
falls on the head of the child.
The poet strikes his lute and sings out ;
'Victory to Man, the new-born, the ever-living !
They kneel down,—the king and the beggar,
the saint and the sinner, the wise and fool,—and cry !
'Victory to Man, the new born, the ever-living ;
The old man from the East murmurs to himself
'I have seen !'*

—THE CHILD—1930.

—TAGORE

সন্ধ্যার একটি রবিরশ্মি
করুণার নিয়মাত্রে হৃদয় গড়ে পড়েছে ।
দগ্ধলিত জনসংখ্যা আপন নাড়ীতে নাড়ীতে যেন শুনতে পেলে
সৃষ্টির সেই প্রথম পরম বাণী ; মাতা, দ্বার খোলো ।
দ্বার খুলে গেল ।
মায়ের কাছেই ভূশয্যা, কোলে তাঁর শিশু,
উষার কোলে যেন শুক হারা ।
দ্বারপাশে পলীল্য পরায়ণ সুরশ্রী শিশুর মাথায় এসে পড়ল ।
কবি দিল আপন বাণীর গারে স্বাকার, গান উঠল আকাশে—
'জয় হোক মানুষের, ওই নব জাতকের, ওই চির জীবিতের ।'
সকলে গান্ন গতে বদল—
রাজা এবং দ্বিজ, সাধু এবং পাণ্ডী, জ্ঞানী এবং মুঢ়
উচ্চৈশ্বর্য ঘোষণা করলে—
'জয় হোক মানুষের, ওই নব জাতকের, ওই চির জীবিতের ।'

প্রায় ১০৪০

শিশুতীর্থ

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

*THE CHILD is the only long poem which the Poet wrote originally in English. The Bengali rendering was done by the Poet himself. The Poet after witnessing the famous passion play at Oberammergau—Germany, depicting the life of Christ, wrote this poem.

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ସିଦ୍ଧିପଥ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦିନ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଚାନ୍ଦିନୀ
 ସିଦ୍ଧିପଥ ବିରାଜି ଶାନ୍ତି, ଅନ୍ଧାର ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତି ଶକ୍ତି ।

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ସୁଦର୍ଶନ ପ୍ରତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ଅନ୍ଧାର ଶାନ୍ତି ଦିନ ଶାନ୍ତି
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স্বাক্ষর

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

മാതൃ-വാക്യങ്ങൾ .

അമ്മേ നീക്ക, ചുറ്റിനിൽ
ജ്ഞാതാ ദീപ്ത -

എൻ ചങ്ങൽക്കൽ മാതൃ-മാതൃക്കൾ
ജ്ഞാതാ ദീപ്ത ;

ജ്ഞാതാ ദീപ്താ ദീപ്താ ദീപ്താ

നമി നന്ദ-ദർശനം,

ഉന്നത ദീപ്താ ദർശനം

ജ്ഞാതാ ദീപ്താ .

ગાંધીજી

ગાંધી

જાલેરું ■ ગાંધીજી ને મનાઈ જાય
ગાંધીજી જાણે દુર જાય.
મુશ્કેલી છે ને તું કેરું
વિજયનું મંદિર.
જાણે દુર, જાણે કાંઈ,
માણ-માણ જાણે-કાંઈ,
જીવન છે કેરું જાણે
દુર મુજબ જાણે,
વિજયનું મંદિર ॥

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૨૪ જાણે. ૨૨૨૦
વિજયનું મંદિર ॥
ગાંધીજી જાણે જાણે

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କୋହାଳ ଦିବିମ୍ବ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦମ ଲୋକେ ମାନ୍ୟତା ?
 ଏଲୋହ ହାଏ ଲୋକେ ମାନ୍ୟତା ଏହି ଦୁରାବ ॥
 ତାହା ଚାଲି ଦୁଇଟି ଚାନ୍ଦ୍ର
 ମିଶ୍ର ଚାନ୍ଦ୍ର,
 ଆଜି ଏଲୋହ ଆଜି ଏଲୋହ
 ବାହୁ ଏଲୋହ ।
 ତାହା ଦିବିମ୍ବ ଲୋକେ ଏହି
 ଦୁଇଟି ଚାନ୍ଦ୍ର ॥

କୋମଳ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଶରୀର ଲୋକର ଆକୃଷ୍ଟକାରୀ
 ସବୁ ହାତ ମିଳି ନିଜ ନିଜର କାମ କରନ୍ତି ।
 ଏହି ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଶରୀର
 ଶାନ୍ତି ହୁଏ ।
 ଏହି ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଶରୀର
 ଶାନ୍ତି ହୁଏ,
 ଆହୁରି କିମ୍ବା ଶାନ୍ତି ହୁଏ
 କିଛି କିଛି ॥

ਮੁੱਲ
੪੨ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

એમા આશરું હશે ।
 શરિરું હશે એમા પૂરું
 તે આશરું મરુતું ।
 મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં એમા
 એકન આલોક
 મૃત્યુ એ ભાષે ;
 કૌનકાલેરૂં આજમ રૂત
 ઠિરકાલેરૂં હશે
 એમા આશરું હશે ॥

મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં એમા,
 આશરું દિલ્લોરૂં એમા ।
 દિલ્લે આશરું એકનકાલે
 કામરૂં રૂત
 મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં,
 એમા મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં
 એમા મૃત્યુરૂં મૃત્યુરૂં,
 એમા આશરું હશે ॥

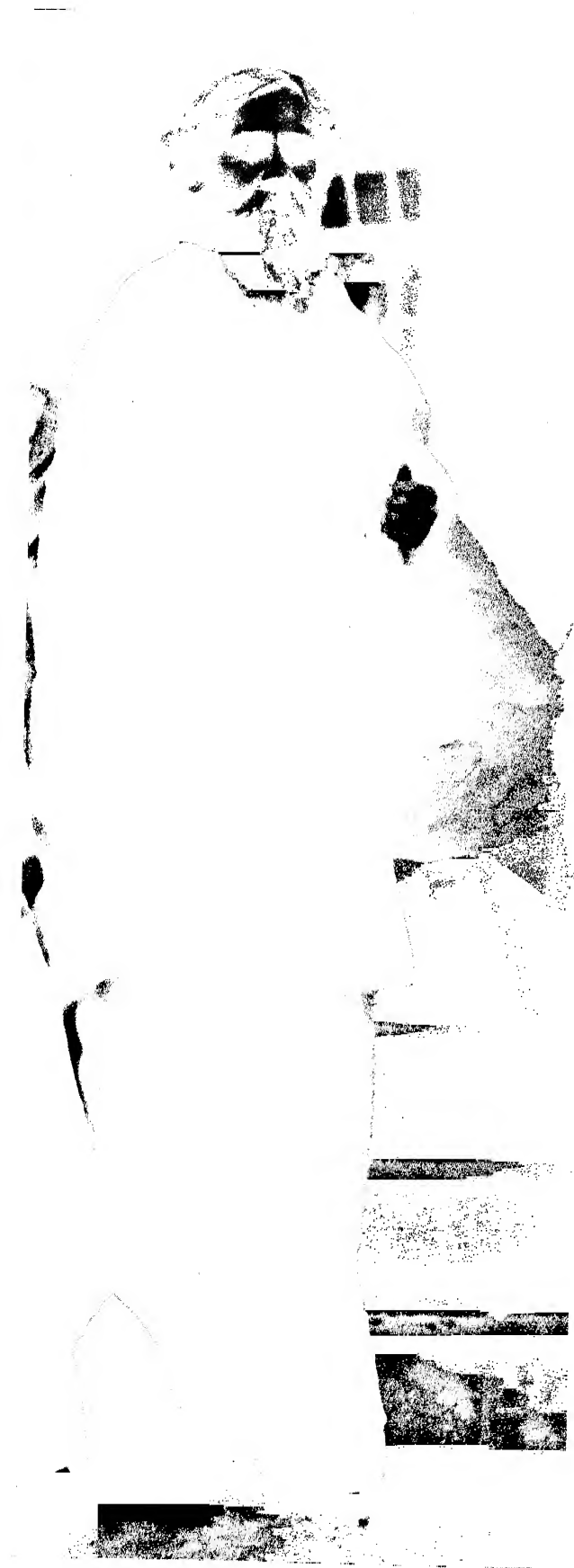
જાન્યુઆરી ૨૦૦૨

આમારું મૂકિત ગાલરું મૂકે
એકે આપણાને ।
આમારું મૂકિત મૂળાં મૂળાં
બામ બામે ॥

મેરું બાલરું મૂકે મારું
રવિરે, સોનિ આપણાને,
દિગ્દિગ્દિ કે હડાં આમારું
ભાનુરત્તામે ॥

બન મેના ભાઈ બાપાના ઠાલરું
મૂલેરું મારે ।
કુલિ-પાણીનારું દિવિડું લિખાં
પરખે મારે ।
કાંઈ મારું રાકુનકા
રાજ આમારું કપાલકથા,
કાંઈ આમારું ભાઈનીનાં
દાંડાં જામે ॥

- મુનુકા
૨૦ માર્ચ ૧૯૭૩
૭૦૨૩



বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য পরিষদে সম্বর্ধনা সভায় - ১৯১৩

AT BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD - 1913

THE CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

মৃত্যুঞ্জয় রবীন্দ্রনাথ

চারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য্য



১৯১১ সাল। আজ থেকে পঞ্চাশ বছর আগের কথা। সেই বছর জাতীয় কংগ্রেসের অধিবেশন হবে কলকাতায়। স্থান ঠিক হয়েছে গ্রীষ্মার পার্ক, পরে যাবে বলা হয় লেডিস্ পার্ক।

অধিবেশনের দিন ২৬শে ডিসেম্বর। এর ঋণ কংগ্রেসদিন আগে ১২ই ডিসেম্বর, দিল্লী দরবারে সম্রাট পঞ্চম জর্জ যোগনা করেছেন যে বঙ্গ-বিভাগ স্থগিত করা হল। জাতীয় কংগ্রেস এখন মডারেনিদের কুক্ষিগত। ওই সংবাদে তারা উল্লসিত, কারণ প্রাদেশী আন্দোলনের ফলে settled fact unsettled হল। সম্রাট কলকাতায় আসছেন ৩০শে ডিসেম্বর, কংগ্রেস অধিবেশন শেষ হবার ঠিক দু দিন পরে। মডারেনি নেতারা হির করলেন, কংগ্রেসের অধিবেশনে সম্রাটের প্রতি আনুগত্য জানিয়ে একটি প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করা হবে। কিন্তু তার জন্য ত্রো চাই উপযুক্ত একটি গান। প্রাদেশ একজন উপস্থিত হলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিকট। ভারতসম্রাটের জয়গান করে গান রচনা করতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অস্বীকৃত হলেন। এর পরিবর্তে বিশেষ চিরস্মরণীয় স্বর করে একটি গান লিখে পাঠিয়ে দিলেন। কতারা দেখলেন যে গান ভারতসম্রাটের স্তুতি হিসাবে ব্যবহার করা চলে না। তারা অন্যত্র চেষ্টা করতে থাকলেন, শেষ অবধি একটি হিন্দী গান নির্বাচিত হল। এক দিনের অধিবেশনে সেটা গাওয়া হল।

‘বন্দে মাতরম্’ গান দিয়ে আরম্ভ করে কংগ্রেসের প্রথম দিনের অধিবেশন হল। দ্বিতীয় দিনের কাগজের পুরে গীত হল রবীন্দ্রনাথ-রচিত ওই মনু গানটি। গানটি হল,—

অন্যগমন-অধিনায়ক জয় হে, ভারত প্রাচ্য বিধাতা

আজ স্বাধীন ভারত যে গানটিকে তার জাতীয় সংগীত রূপে গ্রহণ করেছে তা সর্বপ্রথম যাবার সময়ক পীত হয় আজ বর্তে পঞ্চাশ বছর আগে। তাই আমাদের জাতীয় আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে এই লেডীস্ পার্কটি বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থান অধিকার করেছে। রবীন্দ্রজন্মের শতবর্ষ পূর্তিতে কলকাতা পৌরপাড়া প্রাদেশ অনধীনের জন্য যে এই স্থানটি নির্বাচন করেছিলেন, সেজন্য আমরা তাঁদের অভিনন্দন জানাই।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবদ্দশাতেই ওই গানটি নিয়ে কোনো কোনো মহত্ম মুদ্র গুরুত্ববিশিষ্টোনা গিয়েছিল। বলা হয়েছিল, ‘অন্যগমন অধিনায়ক’ গানটি ভারতসম্রাট পঞ্চম জর্জের গুণকীর্তনে রচিত। একটি কেশস্বীকার করে গানের সমস্তটি যদি তাঁরা পড়তেন তবে লজ্জাতে পেতেন, ওই গানে একস্থানে আছে,—

পতন-অভ্যুদয়-বন্ধুর-পয়া যুগযুগাবধি যাত্রী।
হে চিরস্মরণীয়, তব স্বথচক্রে মুগ্ধরিত পথ দিবারাত্রি॥

বাহিরের-সমালোচনার উত্তর দিতে বলার রবীন্দ্রনাথ যা লিখেছিলেন ইংরেজিতেই তা উদ্ধৃত করি,—

A friend, influential in government circles, has importuned me to compose a song in praise of the King. His request has amazed me, and the amazement was mingled with anger. It was under the stress of this violent agitation that I proclaimed in the Janaganamana-Adhinayaka song the victory of that Dispenser of India's destiny who chariots the paths rugged with the rise and fall of nations — of Him who dwells within the heart of man and leads the multitudes. That the Great Charioteer of man's destiny in age after age could not by any means be George the Fifth or George the Sixth or any other George, even my loyal friend realised : because however powerful his loyalty to the King, he was not wanting in intelligence.

এই প্রসঙ্গে অন্য এক পত্রে লিখেছেন,—

I should only insult myself if I cared to answer those who consider me capable of such unbounded stupidity as to sing in praise of George the Fourth or George the Fifth as the Eternal Charioteer leading the pilgrims on their journey through countless ages of timeless history of mankind.

ওই গানের শেষ ছত্রটিও অনুবাদনযোগ্য :

জয় জয় জয় হে, জয় বিদেশেশ্বর, মানবভাষাবিনাতা

১৯১১ সালের ঘটনাবলি বঙ্গভিষ্ম। আরও উল্লেখ পিছু হতে যাওয়া থাক। ১৯০৫ সাল, ১৬ই অক্টোবর -৩০শে আশ্বিন। ব্রিটিশ সরকার সমগ্র বাঙালিগণের প্রতিবাদ অগ্রাহ্য করে বাংলাদেশকে দুর্গও ভাগ্য করল। বাঙালিও পণ করল, এ বিভাগে যে নীরবে মেনে নেবে না। ওই দিনটিকে চিরস্মরণীয় করার জন্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই ইস্তাহার প্রচার করলেন,—

“আশ্বিনী ৩০শে আশ্বিন বাংলাদেশ ঘাইন দ্বারা বিভক্ত হইবে। কিন্তু ঈশ্বর যে বাঙালিকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করেন নাই তাহাই সমরণ ও প্রচার করিবার জন্যে সেই দিনকে আমরা বাঙালির রাধি-বন্ধনের দিন করিয়া পরস্পরের হাতে হরিদ্রাবর্ণের হস্ত বাধিয়া দিব।”

ওই দিন সকালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ খালি পায়ে এক বিরাট শোভা-যাত্রার সামনে থেকে প্রদর্শন করলেন। সেখানে পরস্পরের হাতে রাধি বাধা হল। অপরাহ্নে ফেডারেশন হলের ভিত্তি স্থাপন হবে। স্থান নির্বাচিত হয়েছে, আজ সেখানে

সেডীজ পার্ক তার প্রায় কয়েকশতক উত্তরে। বোম্বশস্যের শায়িত অবস্থায় ফাঁপ হতে প্রানন্দমোহন বসু ফেডারেশন হলের ভিত্তি স্থাপন করতেন। তার ইংরেজি ভাষণ পাঠ করতেন আন্তঃদেশ টোপুরি, বা'লা অনুবাদ পড়তেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। তারপর এক বিরাট জনসমুদ্র আপার সার্কুলার বোড ঘরে উত্তর দিকে চলল। পুরো-ভাগে প্রানের দল, তার মধ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ। সকলে গান করল,—

ওদের বাঁধন যতই শক্ত হবে ততই বাঁধন টুটবে
মোদের ততই বাঁধন টুটবে।
ওদের যতই আগি বন্ধ হবে মোদের আগি ফুটে
ততই মোদের আগি ফুটে।

এ প্রানটি শেষ হল, দ্বিতীয় প্রান আরম্ভ হল,—

বিসির বাঁধন কাঁটে তুমি এমন শক্তমান—
তুমি কি এমন শক্তমান!
আমাদের ভাবপ্রভা ত্রোমার হাতে এমন অভিমান—
ত্রোমাদের এমন অভিমান।
চিরদিন চাকুরে পিছে, চিরদিন রাখবে নিচে—
যত বল নাহি দে ত্রোমান, যত না দেই নিম।
শায়নে যতই যোগে, আছে বল দুর্বলেরও
হুত্না যতই বড়ে, অচেনে উপমান।
আমাদের শক্তি মেয়ে ত্রোমার বাচবি নারে,
বোঝা ত্রোম ভাগি হলেই জুতবে ত্রোমান।

বোঝা দিন দিন ভারি হয়ে চলল, শেষ অবধি ত্রো জুতল, মতুন বুঝ আরম্ভ হল, কিংআমাদের আপশোয় করে মেল, রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতিমদহ তা দেখল না।

১৯১১-র ডিসেম্বর আগের একটা ঘটনা বলবুম, হুঁচক পড়ের এক ব্যাপারের উল্লেখ করি।—

আমি লেফটেন্যান্ট অফিসার হয়েছি। প্রতিবাদ-মত্ৰা হল, রবীন্দ্রনাথ পলক পড়লেন। সিউন হল দিক করা হল। অবিরোধন যৌদন হবার কথা তার তিন দিন আগে সরকার যোগদা করল যে সরকারি বা আদায়কারি কোনো স্থানে এ মত্ৰা হতে পারবে না।

সরকারি দিনে শুকুম দিতেম সরকার আর শুকুমনার ভাষণও করতেন সেই সরকার, অতএব যাবস্ত হল যে সিউন হলের মালিক একটি আদায়কারি প্রতিষ্ঠান, তত্রো সিউন হল ওই মত্ৰা হতে পারবে না। জানমোহন লাইব্রেরির পক্ষ থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আমন্ত্রণ করা হল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ 'কিত্রী ইচ্ছার কর্ম' প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করতেন। ওই প্রবন্ধের অর্থ একটি উদ্ধৃত করি—

"ন্যায় ভলবারা যত্নকে আমাদের রাষ্ট্রের প্রতিবেদিত যেমন ছিল তেমনিই আছে। যখন জনপ্রিয়ের ক অক্ষরেরও পড়ন হয় নাহি তখনও এই পথের পথিকবৃন্দের ন্যায় গান ছিল,—

কতকাল পরে পাশ্চানি করে
দুখসাগরি যাত্রারি পার হবে ?

আর আজ যখন হোমরুলের পাকা ফলসি প্রায় আমাদের

খোলের কাছে বুঝিয়া পড়িল আছও সেই একই গান—মেঘমল্লার বাগেণ, যতিতান্নাভা।"

বলা বাজল স্বাধীনতা যুগেও ওই গানের স্বর-গ্রান-স্বর কাঠিনি।

রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কাছে থেকে দেখবার যখন সুযোগ এল তখন প্রথম খুঁকা বোঝল এই, রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রাচীন পথী না নবীনদের মত্ৰাভী। দেওলুন, বৈদিক মত্ৰ উচ্চারণ করে হস্তচালনা হতে, অন্যদিকে লক্ষ্য করলুম, যনবায়ের ভিত্তির উপর পতিষ্ঠিত করে প্রতীচিকিৎসাকেন্দ্রগুলি গঠন করতেন। ধীরে ধীরে এই কথাটি হৃদয়ঙ্গম হল যে তিনি কোনো পথীই নন। প্রাচীন যোগানে মহং তিনি তা গ্রহণ করতে এতটুকু দ্বিধা করেন নি, নবীনের মোহ গ্রনপ্রেরে বোধের অন্তরায় হয়ে দাঁড়াতে পারেনি। অন্যদিকে নবীন যোগানে যত তিনি তা নিতে এতটুকু ইতস্তত করেন নি। যনস্ত মানবসভ্যতার প্রেরে মত্ৰের তিনি ছিলেন প্রতীক। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মানব দেশকালের অতীত বিশ্বমানব। প্রাচীর যে দেশ তাঁর জনমভূমি তাঁর অধিকা ও দারিদ্র্য তাঁকে করেছে কর্মী।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর নিজের পরিচয় দিতে গিয়ে বলতেন,—

"শত্রুশক্তি নাড়িয়ে বাবা আমাকে উচ্চমত্ৰে বধাতে চান, তাঁদের আমি বলি, আমি নিচেকার স্থান নিয়েই জন্মেছি, প্রবীণের প্রবানের আসন থেকে শেলার ওয়দ আমাকে ছুঁনি দিয়েছেন। এই বুঝে মাটি খাওয়ার মধ্যে আমি হৃদয় তেল দিয়ে শেলান, বনস্পতি ওষধির মধ্যে। বাবা মানির কোলের কাছে আছে, বাবা মানির হাতে মানুষ, বাবা মানিতে ইন্টিতে প্রবস্ত করে শেষকালে মানিতেই বিশ্রাম করে, আমি তাঁদের যত্নের বস্তু।"

অন্যত্র, এক কবিতার বলতেন,—

যেতরেতে বাঁধলাম তার,

প্রাণিলাম আরবার,—

মোর নাম এই বলে যতই যোক

আমি তোমাদের লোক,

আর কিছু নয়

এই যোক শেষ পরিচর।

আজ বাবা পূর্ণিবা রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্মশতবার্ষিকী পালন করতে উদগ্রীব হয়েছি। কিং অন্য দেশ রবীন্দ্রনাথকে প্রথম জানল ১৯১৩ সালে যখন প্রাচ্যজাতির কবিতা বিভিন্ন ভাষায় অনূদিত হল। আর রবীন্দ্রনাথের সবটুকু তো তারা পেল না। রবীন্দ্রপ্রতিভার অপরূপ স্করণ ঘটেছে তাঁর লিচিত অজস্র প্রানে। এ বৈদে তো তারা বসিত! বাবা ভাবাত্তর যত্নকে তিনি যে আলোচনা করে গিয়েছেন তা পণ্ডিতদেরও বিস্মিত করেছে। অজস্র উদ্ভব বিচিত্র রূপে ও রমে তিনি মুগ্ধ করেছেন বাগলি পাঠককে। তারা তো দেখল না ওই রবীরান জ্ঞান-বুদ্ধ তপস্বী চৈতন্যের উপর একতরা হাতে করে নাচতে নাচতে গিয়েছেন,—

আগিকারী হীরাপারী দোলে ভালে,
কাঁপে ছন্দ ভালেমন্দ ভালে ভালে,
নাচে জন নাচে মৃত্যু পাড়ে পাড়ে
তাঁর থে থে তাঁর থে থে তাঁর থে থে।

বাংলাদেশে জন্মেছিলেন বলেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর কোনো গল্প লিখতে পেরেছিলেন, আর এখনকার প্রদর্শনীতে টেনে মা এনে তিনি যে এক নতুন প্রদর্শনচর্চা ফটি করে সাহিত্যের দু'কূল ভাসিয়ে দিলেন তারই আশায়ে বাঙালির চিত্ত আকোড়িত হয়।

রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ বাণীবাদের কাছে সম্মত করিয়ে রাখবার ভার বাঙালির। আর যে নগরীতে এই মহামানবের আবির্ভাব হয়েছিল ও তিরোভাব পড়ে, সেই মহানগরীর পৌর পতিষ্ঠান এককালি রাখার 'রবীন্দ্র সত্ৰণী' নাম দিয়ে কি তাই রাখ শোষণ করে ফেলবে?

রবীন্দ্রনাথের আবির্ভাব তিরোভাবের কথাই মনে পড়ে যাচ্ছে জলধন সোনের অবিস্মরণীয় উক্তিঃ

সে কোন্ সমরপাণ্ডিত বুঝে, কোন্ সত্যকালে, এই আভিভূমির বুজাবড়ে, কোন্ পুণ্যভোয়া দরবরী দৃষ্টিহীন পরিভ্রমীর শাফ-রসাস্পদ তপোবনে, কোন্ দেবকল্প মহামানবেরা অশ্রুতের অবি-
নার্যকে অভয়কর্ষ ডেকে বনেছিলেন—

শ্রুত্ব নিম্নে অনুশাস্ত পুত্রাঃ

সেই আশ্রনক, ত্রিকালজ্ঞ তত্ত্বদর্শীদের মধ্যে আমি যেদিন বরণ্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাক্ষাৎ পেয়েছিলাম।

সেই যে করে, কোন্ আনন্দের দ্বিক্রিয়ায় বহু বৈদ্যমূলে সমবেত মহাশিবদ পণ্ডিত-পবন মূর্খান ত করে উদাহরণে আমগান করেছিলেন, সেই অসামান্য প্রায়কমণ্ডলে আমি যেদিন রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাক্ষাৎ পেয়েছিলাম।

সে পুণ্যশ্রমিক আদিপ্রাণিগণ প্রভীরকণ্ঠে তখনো অকুলমীর বেদমন্ত্র উচ্চারণ করে পবিত্র হোমানবের অধ্বিন্দবাহকে যজ্ঞজ্বলিত

দিতেম, আমি সেই মনস্ত্রোদের মধ্যে ঋষিক রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেখেছিলাম।

সে বুঝবিস তাপস-সংহতি একদিন সেই মহত্তা মধ্যায়-
দ্বন্দ্বভ্রমণের উদ্দেশে মন্ত্রজ্ঞান হয়ে যুক্ত করে প্রাণনা করেছিলেন,
অসতো মা যদগময় তমসো মা জ্যোতিঃগময়—

সেই নিত্যমুক্ত শুদ্ধপ্রভাব পরমোপাযকদের মধ্যে আমি সাক্ষাৎ রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেখেছিলাম, তাঁর মধুর কণ্ঠস্বর শুনেও পেয়েছিলাম।

সেই যে কোন্ দ্বন্দ্বযাত্রা দিনে, নৈমিষারণে এক মহতী পরিঘ-
দের অধিবেশন হয়েছিল, সেই পবিত্র স্থানে সমবেত মহাপুরুষগণের
মহাকা আমি জ্যোতিঃময় প্রাণমূর্তি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেখেছিলাম,
তিনি অভিনবপী শুনেও পেয়েছিলাম।

আরপর তাঁকে দেখেছি কানকানায়িত ক্রৌঞ্চমিথুনের শোকে
তমসাতীরে অশ্রুনির্ভর করতে; তাঁকে দেখেছি জেতবনবিহারে
বোদ্ধস্ব দ্বীপ্তপ্রভাব গ্রন্থ যৌতনের পাশে আনন্দস্নানরূপে; তাঁকে
দেখেছি উজ্জয়িনীর রাজসভায় মহারাজ বিক্রমাদিত্যের নবরত্ন-
মণ্ডপে।—এমনিতে শতসহস্র স্থানে, শতসহস্রবেশে, শতসহস্রাব
আমি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেখেছি। এই দ্রষ্টা, যদ্রষ্টা, অদ্বিতীয় মহা-
মানবকে আমি চিনেছি, আমার মস্তিষ্ক পান জাণিয়েছি।

সেই বুধবুধাঙ্কুরের রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আমি এখানে দেখেছি,
কখনো রাজবেশে, কখনো ককিরের আশ্রয়ায়, কখনো বাউলের
আলখারাপরা,—এক গ্রামে ধাত্ত নৃত্য করত, কখনো আশ্রভোলা
কবির বেশে, কখনো জলবুদ্ধ তত্ত্বদর্শীর মুণ্ডিতে। কখনো
দেখেছি স্বদেশের গুপ্তদুর্গে কাতর মানুষের মতো, কখনো দেখেছি
সরনারায়ণ, সকল ব্রহ্মনিবৃত্ত উদাসী রাখির মতো।

তিনি বুদ্ধজয়, আপনার অধিনায়ক কাঁড়ির চেয়েও মহৎ,
তিনি লোকে লোকে পূজিত।

জয় হোক জয় হোক নব অরবোদয়।

কুণ্ঠ দিগন্তে জাগে জ্যোতিঃময়।।

নমো অপরাজিত রানী

অসত্য মানি

অসং ত শঙ্ক অরণীঃ শশসম।।

এমো নব অপ্রত প্রাণ

চিত্র যৌবন জয় প্রাণ।

নমো নতুংকর আশা

জড়ই নাশা,

অন্ধন দূর হোক, বন্ধন হোক অয়।।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর



কবির গানের অন্তঃপ্রকৃতি

হাসিন্তকুমার হালদার

একদিন বেন গানিমা, শাস্তিনিকেতনে মহাকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ মহাশয়ের নিকট থাকার কালে আমার তিনি হঠাৎ প্রশ্ন করলেন : “আমার গানের ভিতর ‘তুমি’ কি পায়?” প্রশ্নের উত্তর তখন সহসা ‘নি’ যে দিবেচি যেনখা এখন আর আমার মনে নেই, কেবল প্রশ্নটির কথাই আমার মনে আছে। মহাকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানে মনে কবিরে দেয় আরশাবকের একটি পাখিমা : “এতে আছে,— ‘‘আনারবাগ্নিগ্নিবি’’— অগ্নি, যে অপকণা! আমার নিকট পদাধিত হ’ল। কবির গান সেই শাস্ত্রত প্রকাশের প্রাথমিক-ভবে অন্যতম। তাঁর নিকট থাকার কালে, তাঁর গীতিরচনার ভিতর যাবজ্জীবন লোচনান এই যত্নকেই অনুভব করেছি। তাঁর গান রূপ দিয়েছে, বা দিয়েছে, ভাবাবেশে ভরে দিয়েছে চিত্তকে। এই গীতিউদ্ভূত রূপ ও ভাব কেবলমাত্র কৈবল্যপ্রাপ্তির পথের সাক্ষ্য দেয়নি দিয়েছে অন্যতর আনন্দ-আবাদ। চাক্ষুণ্যের আবে, ‘‘যাহা তুমি তাহাই সমুদ্র, আর যাহা হল তাহাই মরণশীল।’’ আর সেই ‘‘তুমিতে কিছুই দেবা যায়না, আর কিছু শোনা যায়না, অন্য কিছু শুনা যায়না, তাহাই ‘তুমি’।’’ মহাকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ দ্বিতীয় সেই বাক্যে ‘তুমি’ই উপায়ক। ‘‘অরে’ অগ্নি বিষয়ায়জিত বা ভেবে যে সব নাই তা’ তিনি উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন। কারো ও পানে তিনি কয়েকপের মাঝে সেই স্বপ্নানকে জীবন ভাবে আনার সমান করে গেছেন। ‘তুমি’র মাঝে প্রকাশ করেছেন গানের,

“তুমি’র এই মাঝে ছাপিয়ে আবার ভবনে
আনার পানে নইলে যে কি কোথাও বসবে।”

* * * * *

যে পোন কাঁপায় নিশুদীপায় পূর্বকে
হঠাৎ যে যে উঠবে ভেসে পলকে
যে দিন আমার সকল হৃদয় ভরবে।”

কবিরে যুক্তোপন পণ্ডিতেরা তাঁদের বামিক যাক্স-সমূহের (Saint) মত জায়গাদী (mystic) ভাবে দেখেছেন, কবির হিতৈষকতা জায়গাদী শাস্ত্রত যত্নকে দেখতে পাননি। বহুতাত্ত্বিক দর্শনের হিতৈষক যুক্তোপনের পক্ষে অবস্থমূলক ভাবের আবার দর্শনের কোথা শক্তি। তাঁরা সৌচকে ভাবের পক্ষে শুধু আনু-সরণীয় পক্ষেদর্শিতা বলেই মনে করেন।

মহাকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলে শিক্ষা পেয়েছিলেন বেদান্ত দর্শন বিষয়ে তাঁর পিতার নিকট এবং আত্মীবন তাঁর বাক্যই ছিল ‘তুমি’। তিনি ‘তুমি’ বুঝার মতো, তুপের মধ্যে, শুদ্ধ দীপের মধ্যে এবং চক্ৰস্বরূপ প্রহরিকায় তুমিই অপরূপ রেখাপাত অনুভব করেছিলেন। শরাদী যখন বস্তুই যে তুমি অস্তরের রেখা-বর্ণে উজ্জ্বল হয়ে আছে এবং ‘তুমি’ই তাই তুমি নিখিল ও জ্ঞান, তাঁর কথা তাঁর নিকট এমনই স্পষ্ট ছিল যে তিনি নিতীক ভাবে সেই ‘অনন্ত মুক্তিকে’ আহ্বান

করেছেন জীবনের মধ্যে মরণকে বড় করে দেখে। সেই মুক্তিকে লক্ষ্য করে গেয়েছেন :

“এই কথাটা ধরে রাখি, মুক্তি তোরে পেতেই হবে
যে পথে গেছে পীরের পানে, সে পথে তোরে যেতেই হবে।”

তিনি এই মুক্তির জন্য কোনো একটি বিশেষ প্রতীক বা প্রতিমা মনে স্থাপনা করে তাঁর কাছে তাঁর প্রার্থনা নিবেদন করেননি। তিনি তাকে পণ্ডিত্যের অন্তর করেছেন তাঁর নিরন্তর বিচারে। উন্নীলিত হয়েছে তাঁর মানস-সহস্রদল গানের ভিতর দিয়ে এক অজুতপূর্ণ ঈশ্বরিক শক্তি লাভ করে। কবির মনঃক্ষেত্রে প্রথিত হয়েছে গানের অস্তরে অস্তরে তুমি’র অনন্ত ও অবিনশ্বর স্তব-শাস্তি। তাকে তাঁর স্বচ্ছ মানস-মুকুরে প্রতিকলিত করেছেন এবং তাঁর প্রাণে তাঁরই বাণীকে পেয়েছেন, এবং বলেছেন :

“আমার বাণী আমার প্রাণে লগে
যত তুমি’র ডাকি, আমার আপন হৃদয় জাগে।”

তুমি’র পথে হৃদয়কে জাগ্রতাই ছিল তাঁর গানের একটি বিশেষ ধর্ম। তাইজা আল কবির কাব্য ও গান সর্ববাসীসম্মত ও সার্বজনীন রূপ পেয়েছে বেদান্ত প্রতিপাদ্য ধর্মের এই বিশেষ গুণ গ্রহণ করায়। তাঁর রচনায় বৌদ্ধের বিষয়-তুসর্গহীন শাস্তি ও মৈত্রী পান, খৃষ্ট-কমান্দধারা ও খৃষ্টের উদার বিবেকপূর্বক সকল বাণীকে লক্ষ্য করেন, মুসলিম ধর্মাবলম্বী ও একেশ্বরবাদের মহত্ব দেখতে পান।

বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির মধ্যে কবি একটি বিশুদ্বি উপলব্ধি করেছেন এবং তাঁর প্রকাশের বিচিত্র ক্রম-বিব্যাগ করে গেছেন তাঁর গানের ভিতর দিয়ে। গানের সুর তাঁর বর্ণ, কথা তাঁর রূপ, আনন্দ তাঁর বাহন এবং দিব্য-কনক-উজ্জ্বলিত রশ্মি-দুর্গতি তাঁর প্রেরণা। অরূপ তুমিকে শুধু একটি অর্থহীন আকারের কাঠামো দিয়ে বস্তবহীন, নিরর্থক কদম্বতার পরিণত করেননি তাঁর গানে। কথার সঙ্গে সুর-সংযোগে তাঁর বাণী রূপ পেয়ে উজ্জ্বল ও সুখর হয়ে উঠেছে। এই সুখরতা প্রগল্ভতা নয়, দূর্বদশিতা। সংসারের বাসনা-বাসন-বাধিত কেবল একটি উজ্জ্বল বা সচরাচর সকল গানের মধ্যে পাওয়া যায়, কবি তাঁর দিক ও মাড়াননি। এইখানে তিনি সাধারণ কবিদের অপেক্ষা বড় উর্ধ্বে অবস্থিত। ভারত-বর্ষের ধর্ম-দর্শন এবং সংস্কৃতির আবহাওয়ায় তাঁর কবিত্ববন বদ্ধিত। তিনি প্রেম চেয়েছেন সেই অজানার কাছে এবং কখনো কখনো আক্ষেপ করে গেয়েছেন :

“খিয়ার মাঝে লুকিয়ে ছিলে দেখতে আমি পাইনি
বাহির পানে চোখ মেলেচি, হৃদয় পানে চাইনি।”

মহাকাব্যি রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই প্রকার সমালোচনাত্মক নিকটদৃষ্টি নিরন্তর ধ্যান-নিরত চিত্তের প্রভাবে। "তাই তাঁর নিকট বিষয়বস্তুর সূক্ষ্মতম বিষয়ের স্ফুটন প্রকাশ হয়েছে। আমরা যখন তাঁর জীবনে এই প্রকার ভাব-সমাধি ঘটেছে। তাঁরই ভাবের প্রকাশিত কবির মনকে ও সমালোচনা প্রাপ্ত করেছিল। এই যেই ভাবার্থী ঋষিদের সমালোচনা, ভোগ্যের বিষয় ভোগ্যের মত নয়। এই সমালোচনামতে ত্রিবিধ, যথাঃ পারমাণবিক (সাময়িক), ব্যবহারিক (প্রায়গিক) এবং প্রাতিভাসিক (আনয়িক) সমালোচনা। পারমাণবিক (সাময়িক) ধ্যান কবিকে নির্মল অতীন্দ্রিয় স্বরূপের আভাস দিয়েছে, তিনি এই আত্মদান অরূপ দেশের ছিলেন পণিক। পারমাণবিক (ব্যবহারিক) সমালোচনা বা 'সুপ্রত্যক্ষ' তাঁর মনোভাবের প্রত্যক্ষ দর্শনে সমুদ্ভূত হয়ে দেখা দিয়েছে কারো ও গানে এই পরমার্থ সমালোচনা। তেমনি প্রাতিভাসিক (আনয়িক) সমালোচনা বা 'অনুভূতি' মনে আমরা বহন করি—বস্তুতে সর্গসমবৎ বা সর্গসমবৎ, তারও আভাস মাঝে মাঝে পাই কবির গানে ও কাব্যে। তিনি তখন ভূমির সমালোচনা পথ দেখতে চাইছেন নানা ভাবে।

"ওগে জেগে ত্রিভূত ভাবি
কেউ কখনো খুঁজে কি পার
স্বর্গলোকের চাবি?"

আর,

"প্রাণে গান নাই মিছে তাই—ফিরি য়ে
বাঁশিতে যে গান খুঁজে।"

এইসব গানের মতো প্রাতিভাসিক সমালোচনা আভাস আছে। মানুষের অধিক যে ক্ষুদ্র তার কথা কবি বলেছেনঃ

সমুদয় মানবের যৌন্দর্যে উন্মত্ত
হও তুমি অক্ষয় ক্ষুদ্র
ক্ষুদ্র রূপ কোথা যায় বাতাসে উন্মত্ত
দুই চারি পলকের পর।

কবির গান বাখা সম্পদে ভরা। এই বাখা সমবেদনার বাখা—পরের দুঃখকে নিজের বলে বোধ করার বাখা। আমাদের দেশেই পেয়েছি আদি মহাকাব্যি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে। তাঁর মুখে প্রথম শ্রোতাদের জন্ম হ'ল শৌক্য সমবেদন হ'তে উচ্চারিত তাঁর বাণীতে। কবির গানে আছে

"বাখার বেশে এসে আমার দ্বারে
কোন্ অতিথি, ফিরিয়ে দেন নারে।"

সমবেদন সঙ্কীর্ণনীই সাহিত্য সৃষ্টির প্রসূতি-বেদনা। সঙ্কীর্ণ-যজ্ঞে কল্পনাতেই মুক্তি, যুক্তিতর্কের স্থান নেই এতে। তাঁর মতো আছে প্রগতি, সঙ্গতি ও বিকাশ। প্রগতিই পথ, সঙ্গতি তার উপকরণ বা পাথর এবং প্রাণের বিকাশই ধর্ম। কল্পনার সঙ্গতিই হ'ল সঙ্কীর্ণতার উত্তর স্বর্গসৌধ নির্মাণের উপকরণ। এই সঙ্গতি সহজে লাভ করা যায় না,—তার বিকাশ সাধন-সাপেক্ষ। সঙ্গতি সম্পন্ন ব্যক্তি যেমন কৃপণ হ'লে জীবন হয় তার ব্যর্থ, তেমনি বিকাশহীন পাণ্ডিত্যসম্বলী পণ্ডিতেরাও সৃষ্টি যজ্ঞে যোগ দিতে পারেন না। কল্পনার সঙ্গতির জন্মে চাই মনো-বিকাশ। কল্পনা-সঙ্গতিতে কার্পণ্য অসম্ভব ও বন্ধ।

কেউ কেউ মনে করেন কবির গানের মতো সাহিত্য প্রতিভা লেখ আছে বটে কিন্তু ছোঁরাবো বিদোহীভাব তাতে কিছুই নেই। তাঁর গানে পোড়ার বা পানিপানের মত অশব্দ্যবো ছোঁরাবো বাতানা দেয়না—ললিতবলার মত তাঁর বিষয়বস্তুর উপলব্ধি হয় ধীরে ধীরে। কবির গান ও কাব্যের যৌন্দর্য ক্রমে ক্রমে স্বাভাবিক প্রতীয়মান হয়।

"শব্দে শব্দে যখন ত্রিভূত
তবেই রূপের রমণীয়তা।"

যৌন্দর্যের গুণই হ'ল চিত্র-রমণীয়তা। কেবল ধীরে ধীরে যার রমণীয়তা উপলব্ধি করা যায়, একেই যৌন্দর্য বলে। গানের ব্যক্ত ভাষা-শব্দ ক্রমে যখন সুরে রূপ পায় এবং শ্রোতার মনকে ভাব-লেশে মুগ্ধ ও অভিভূত করে তখনই তাঁর যৌন্দর্য উপলব্ধি হয়। মায়ের বাৎসল্য প্রেমের দিকে বিকাশ হয় যখন তিনি তাঁর সমালোচনা প্রতি মুগ্ধ মেয়ে তাকিয়ে থাকেন। গানে বা সাহিত্যে বা অন্য কোনো ললিত কলায় অরাজকতার স্থান নেই। বিদোহী বিষয় উদ্বেগ করে মাত্র, স্বর্গী এই বেগে যায় না, কোনো ললিত কলাতেই তাঁর স্থান নেই। বিষয়বস্তুর ভৌতিক খেলা বাদকনের পক্ষে সম্ভব হ'তে পারে, কবির পক্ষে না শিবীর পক্ষে অপেক্ষা বিষয় নয়।

চিত্রত্বকে নতুন নতুন বেশে দেখেছেন কবি তাঁর সকল রচনায় ভাব-বিশ্বের ও বিষয়বস্তুর সঙ্গতি নিয়ে। কবির গানে তাঁর অনির্বচনীয় গুণকে প্রকাশ করে তাঁর রচনা-বিকাশের কৌশল আর তাঁর বর্ণনামা যোজনা করে সুর। কবি বলেছেন— "বচনের সঙ্গে অনির্বচনের এবং বিষয়ের সঙ্গে রূপের ঐক্য দেখে দিয়েছে চন্দ্র।" এই চন্দ্র বিশ্বরচনায় সর্বত্র প্রসূতি ভাবে আছে। প্রত্যেক শারীরিক আকারের মতো এই চন্দ্র সর্বত্রই হ'ল সুর। মানুষের ভান হ'ল যদি না থাকে তবে থাকে বা বেশী নদা হয়, প্রত্যেকের দুপাশের চোখ মাক-দাঁতি পড়তির মিল না থেকে যদি চন্দ্র পতন হয় তাহলেই নিকৃতি আসে। যৌন্দর্য-রস আর থাকেন। তেমনি কবির কাব্য ও গানে চন্দ্র ও সুরে যদি সাক্ষ্য না থাকে তাহলে তাঁর হয় শৌচবীর্য পরিপাতি। মহাকাব্যি গানে চন্দ্র ও সুর দু'টিই আছে যদ্যে যদ্যে যদ্যে রেখে চলেছে। তাঁর এক বিশেষ কীর্তি হ'ল শাস্ত্রমত বাণী-বাণীর বিচার মেনে নিয়েও বহু প্রকারের রাগের স-বিশেষে তাঁর নিজের বাণীকে রচিয়ে তোলা।

নিবৃত্তি, রামপদ এবং বাউল প্রভৃতি গান ও শাস্ত্রীয় বাণী-বিশেষে গঠিত, কিন্তু তাঁর সুরের দ্বারা ও গতি একই প্রকারের, বৈচিত্র্য নেই। অথচ কবি বাণী-বাণীর মতো বাউল কীর্তন সবই মিলিয়েছেন তাঁর বাণীকে গৌরবের প্রয়োজন অনুসারে। সেই কারণে বহু সঙ্গীত ও পণ্ডিতদের কাছে কবির গান গান সঙ্গীতের মতই থেকে। বাণী-বাণীর শাস্ত্রীয় ব্যাকরণ লক্ষণ দ্বারা তাঁর গীতিকলা যে এক নতুন রূপ পেয়েছে তা এখন ক্রমশঃ সবারই মনে নিতে হচ্ছে। বচনের সঙ্গে সুরের রচনার অনির্বচনীয় রূপ দিয়েছেন কবি বাউল গানে।

প্রকৃতির বিশাল রূপ ও রোচনা একই সঙ্গে কবি প্রকাশ করেছেন সঙ্গীতে ও কাব্যে। এই রোচনার বিকাশ অভাবে সব রচনাই গোড়াহীন ও ছোঁড়াশূন্য হয়। কাব্যের রোচনা কেবল-মাত্র দীপ্তিপ্রদা নয়— চিত্তোদ্ভাসিত দীপ্তিপ্রদ। তাকে প্রাচীন

বলা যায়। সেই স্বাধীন দীর্ঘিগ্ধে প্রজ্জ্বলিত না হলে তাঁর গান বা কাব্য সম্পূর্ণ স্কন্দ ও যুদ্ধ হতে পারিত না। এর জন্য গানে যারনড়া ও শুকুমার বাক্যবিন্যাস এবং ভাষায়ই স্তব রচনারও প্রয়োজন হয়েছে। এই রোচনা-কল্পন যখন প্রস্ফুটিত হয় তখন গানের মধ্যে দিয়ে সদাশিবসম্মান বর্নন অর্থাৎ ইচ্ছাশক্তির নিকটে। সঙ্গীতের চিত্রশালা রোচনা-দীর্ঘিগ্ধে এইভাবে উজ্জ্বল করে রেখেছেন কবি।

যকল লিপ্তবলান রোচনা প্রকাশ হয় অর্ধে তুর্নী আনন্দে। এই আনন্দ যাতে দুর্গার সমবেদনায়, বীরবানের প্রকৌতুহলে, পুষ্পের একান্তন সোণ ও বিক্রমে—তার কোনো সম্মপ্ত মিশ্রণ শায়ন নেই। তাই বলে যোগ্যভাবে কবির রচনায় যাবা যেন তাতে উজ্জ্বল পেলনা। দেশকে স্বাধীনতার জন্যে যত্নবিত্ত করেছেন যাবা দেশের কবিতা এই রোচনা প্রদীপ্ত গানে। দুর্গাকে দায়ী দিতে, পবনকে সযত করিতে, উদ্ধারকে বিনীত করতে, নশীশক্তিকে শঙ্কা করিতে, বর্নিত বাণী। শিল্পীর কলার প্রয়োজন চিত্রকলায় আছে। কবির প্রাচীনকলা, চিত্রীর চিত্রকলা সকলের মনে যকল ভাবনা দুর্গ করে দিয়ে চিত্রকে কলারপ্রস্তুত করে দেয়। তাই কবির গানে বাণী অন্তঃ বাণীর বহুপুত্র কবিও অমর। কবির প্রত্যেক গানের স্বতন্ত্রাধার মধ্যে তনয়িক প্রত্যক্ষ-ভাবে পান ভাবদর্শনীয় অনুভূতি। যথাক্রমে বাণীর ভাষের বাণী সঙ্গীতের বাণীক। মহাকবি সেই বাণীর শাস্ত্রত স্বনিকের গানের পাতি স্বরকে বন্ধে বন্ধে অপরূপ ও বিচিত্র রসে সজ্জ করে রেখেছেন।

নাই বাণীতে কবি ক্রমাগত উপনিষদের 'তৎসমসি' বাক্যের প্রমাণ করে রেখেছেন। যথা এবং অস্তি স্বস্থ হইবে এক, তেমনি কবি তাঁর নিজের মতকে আনন্দচরিত্র যথায় উপলব্ধি করেছেন গানের মধ্যে দিয়ে। এই স্বপ্রতিভার দ্বারা মানবজীবনের যকল দুর্গবাহ ও দীনতাকে হয় করেছেন কবি এর ভয় করার পথও দেখিয়েছেন। খেলেছেন

“ইরে ভয় হইবে ভয়, ভয়ে নীর, হে মিউন।.....এ আঁধার হইবে ভয় হইবে ভয় রে।”

তার নই ভয়েল মধ্যে ছিল অর্ধে তুর্নী আনন্দ। “শিশু যেমন মাঝে মাঝে কেশব ডাকে” তিনিও সেই শিশু হলে পাবার জন্যে মনের আনন্দেই খোঁজে গেলেন। দুর্গাভীকর্ষে অশান্তির মরু-কুণ্ডলা-দাম এই একই য যার সমুদ্রের মধ্যে কবি গানের দ্বারা নিজেকে সুরমুক্ত ও মোক্ষের পথে নিয়ে গেছেন।

কবির চিন্তার মনে তাঁর প্রত্যেক জানুত হয় তাঁর করে। যতদূর তাঁর তাঁর আনন্দ বেরায় তুল করে তাঁদের একমাত্র সৌন্দর্য-বোধ (aesthetics) সাপেক্ষে দিয়ে দেবে বলে। আনন্দের দেশে গর লালিতকলাই অমর্য তত্ত্ববোধক এবং কবি ও শিল্পীর পথ শুধু এই সৌন্দর্যবোধের দ্বারা যাকড়ে পথায় বর্নিত। আনন্দের বৈদিক প্রাণনা অর্থনিয়েন অপরূপ অপরূপকেই বিশেষ যকল রূপের প্রকাশের মধ্যে উপলব্ধি করে গেছেন। “যথাকর্তিত্ত্বা যজ্ঞ—মিচ্ছা নাপকমেশ্বর” যেখানে আকৃতিসেখানেই গুণ বহুমান, পবনেশ্বরই মিচ্ছন। এই শিল্পী ও কবির নিকটে বিশ্বব্রহ্মার প্রত্যেক আকার এমন কি অপরূপাশ্রুতও অস্তিত্ব (নিরাকারের) রূপ প্রতীক প্রত্যক্ষ। “ও কোটি অকণ্ড এই বিলাসি অধাশিত্তি গণিতের একটি প্রত্যক মাত্র। শিল্পীর অমর্য বোধক রূপকল্পনা প্রকাশের পথ পেয়েছেন তাই।

মহানির্বাণ তত্ত্ব শীলকালীর বিষয় আছেঃ

“তব রূপ মহাকাল অপরূপাশ্রুতকরকঃ
মহাশয়সময়ে কালঃ সর্বা প্রাণিমাতি।”

—অর্থাৎ, ‘তোমার রূপ মহাকাল এবং অপরূপ যা ধার কারক মহাপ্রলয়ে সর্বকাল প্রায় হলে তোমাকেই।’ মহাকবি বর্নাকল্পনা নৈরাঙ্কর যাহার রূপ দেখিয়েছেন তাঁর রচিত একটি গানে।

অনন্তশক্তি প্রতীকরূপ দশপ্রহরপদার্থী দুর্গার বর্নিত হইলে তাঁরও কবির গানে কুণ্ডিতেঃ

“এক হাতে তাঁর কপাণ আছে — আর এক হাতে যা
যে যে ভেঙেছে হোঁচ ধরা।”

পৌরাণিক উৎসাহকে বর্ণনা করেছেন—

“মহা মাত্রা মহ কন্যা, মহ লব্ধ স্কন্দী রূপগী.....যুগ্মযুগ্মিত্ত্ব হতে তুমি শুধু বিশেষ প্রেরণী।”

এইভাবে কবি পৌরাণিক অপরূপকে একটি মানব-কল্পনীতে পরিণত করে গেছেন। বিশেষ মধ্যে অন্তরে বৈষ্ণব দান্ডন স্বরূপে পেয়ে তাঁর গানের বাণীতে যা করে দিয়েছেন তাতেও সেই পৌরাণিক মীলমণি কবির বর্ণনামণির কপাণে মণি বর্নিত দেয়। কবির নিকটে এইসব দেবরূপ অনন্তরই পৌরাণিক কবি জানতেন যে—

“ন দেবতা বিদ্যতে কাঙ্ছে, ন প্রহরে, ন মুমুর্ষে
দেবতা হি বিদ্যতে ভাবে, অস্মাৎ ভাবে হি কারণম।”

অর্থাৎ, দেবতা কাঙ্ছে, প্রহরে বা মুমুর্ষে নেই— দেবতা ভাবে বিদ্যমান এবং ভাবই তাঁর কারণ। এই ভাবরূপকে পৌরাণিক কবির বিষয় কবি পেয়েছেন—

“চোখে দেখিস — পাণে কান —
বিহার মাঝে দেখনা করে ভূনখানা।”

রূপে রসে কবি অজানার ভাবের মধ্যে এইভাবে পাবার পথেই গান খোঁজে গেছেন আঁধার। অস্তির মর্মে মর্মে অরূপের রসাবে কবি পেয়েছিলেন তাই।

“তোমার ভুবন মর্মে আমার লাগে,
তোমার আকাশ অগাধ ক্লম অস্তরে মোর ডাগে।”

তাঁর যকল গান রচনার মধ্যেই যদি আবাসনা পুঙ্খভূত হয় আছে। তিনি গানের সুরের মধ্যে যে উপলব্ধি করেছেন তাতেই তাঁর সিদ্ধিলাভ হয়েছে। তিনি তাই অনন্তের নিকটে প্রাণিক জ্ঞানিয়েছেন।

“তোমার কাছে এ বর মাগি, মরণ হতে যেন মাগি গানের সুরে।”

তিনি যথার্থই তাঁর গানের মধ্যেই মরণের পাতে পুনরায় জীবন পেয়ে পুনর্জীবিত হয়েছেন এবং অমর হয়েছেন।

কবির গানের অত্মপ্রকৃতির বিষয় আরো একটি কথা বলাই আছে। কবির গান অত্মকর্তৃত্ব প্রতিকার। কথা ও সুরের একই পাবনা। সঙ্গীত শাসনতে সুরকেই প্রাধান্য দেওয়া হয়।

দায় কাব্য যেমন চন্দে ও শব্দে, চিত্র যেমন রেখা ও বর্ণে তাঁর মতল বক্তব্য প্রকাশ করে এবং তাঁর ভাবপিণ্ড সফুটি হয়, তেমনি দায়র সঙ্গীতেও সুর ও কথায় পাঁচিড়ি নীধা আছে। যেমন বিষয়বস্তুর ভাবসম্পদে গড়া কোনো চিত্রকলার রেখা বা বর্ণ না শিল্পী দিয়েছেন তাঁর কোনো নড়চড় করা যায়না তেমনি দায়র রচিত কথা ও সুর দেওয়া গানে অন্য কোনো সুর যোগনা করা যায়না। পদ্য যেমন তাঁর দলগুলি নিয়ে সম্পূর্ণ ও স্বন্দর, নর কোনো একটা পাপড়িকে অন্য ফুলের পাপড়ি বসিয়ে বজানো যায়না, এও তেমনি ব্যাপার। সব শিল্পেরই লক্ষণ তাঁর গানে সম্পূর্ণতা দেওয়া।

চিত্রকলা যেমন কেবল আকার বা বর্ণেতে আবদ্ধ নয় তেমনি গানও সুর এবং কথাতেই কেবল পরিমিত নয়। তাঁর রচনা যখন চিত্রে এসে লাগে তখনই তাঁর সম্পূর্ণতা জানা যায় এবং তাঁর বিষয়বস্তুর বক্তব্য সফুটি হয়। সুর কেবল মনে অন্যতর বর্ণের সমৃদ্ধি দেয় আর রেখাভাসের চন্দ্র জাগায়। সুরের সঙ্গে কথার যোগে ফোটে বিষয়বস্তুর সারবত্তা রূপ ও ভাব। তেমনি শুধু আকারের দ্বারা চিত্রে পানির্বি সৃষ্টি করা যায় মাত্র। তাতে সারবত্তা বিষয়বস্তুর প্রকাশওপ নেই। কবির গান কেবল সুরের পানির্বি নয়, তাতে আছে সারবত্তা বিষয়বস্তুর ভাবাবেশ। তাঁর

গান মানুষের মন জাগায় করে, দুখায় দুখ দূর করে, অশুভের মনে বোধশক্তি জাগায়, অশান্তিককে ধর্মবুদ্ধি দেয়। কথা ও সুরের অপর যোগে প্রসিকর্ষ করে যেছেন তাঁর গানে। তাঁর মনের মুখ ফিরিয়ে রেখেছিলেন ভূমার দিনে পাঁচিমিত এবং সুর ও কথায় তাঁরই আবেগ দিয়ে গেছেন যুগে যুগে মানুষকে উন্নত করতে ও পরিশুদ্ধ করতে। যে কেহ যখন তাঁর কোনো গান গ্রহণেন এবং যিনি শুনবেন উভয়েই সেই রসানুভূতি আশ্রয় করতে পারবেন। তাঁর গান চিরকালের সম্পদ।

কটোপনিষদে আছে—

“সদাধি ভূতানি আশ্রয়েনানুপশ্যতি”

সমস্ত ভূতবস্তুকে নিজের মতো দেখেন কবি। তাঁর বান, জন, ছপ, তপ, সবই উপলব্ধি করা যায় তাঁর গানের ভিতর দিয়ে। সঙ্গীতের বিষয় শাস্ত্রে আছে :

“জপকোটিতুণ্যং বানং বানকোটিতুণ্যং জয়ং।
বরকোটিতুণ্যং গানং গানং পরতনং নমঃ ॥”

মধুর তোমার গেম যে না পাই, প্রহর হয় শোক -
ভুবন ছুড়ে নইল বেগে আনন্দ-আবেশ।
দিনাচর এই এক কোণাতে সঙ্কামেগের গেম ঘোনাতে
মন যে আমার পুঙ্খপিচে কোণায় নিবন্ধেশ ॥

সারস্তনের কাছকূলের গন্ধ ছাড়াই পলে
অন্ধ বিহীন আলিঙ্গনে সকল অন্ধ ভরে।
এই প্রোবুরি দুয়রিমায় শ্যামলবস্তার গোমার গোমার
জুনি বনে বনাচরে অগ্নি গানের বেশ ॥



সঙ্গীতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ

সৌমেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

ভারতীয় সাংগীতের মূল রসটি হোলো নৈরবাস্তবিক বিশৃঙ্খল। শতাব্দীর পর শতাব্দী ধরে এটি ছিলো নিবিশেষের নীলাভূমি। বিশেষের স্থান ছিলো না ভারতীয় সাংগীতের রাজ্যে। কোনো একটি বিশেষ সফালের রূপ বর্ণনা করে না উঠতো কিছা ভৈরবী। তারা প্রকাশ করছে এমন একটি সফালকে যা সব চিহ্ন নিশেষে মুছে ফেলে দিয়েছে আপনার মূল থেকে। আমাদের রাগরাগিণীর রস তাই এই ব্যক্তি-বিশেষহীন নৈরবাস্তবিক রস। বৈচিত্রের অবকাশ নেই এই ব্যক্তি-স্বাতন্ত্র্য-বঞ্চিত রাগরাগিণীর মধ্যে। এখান থেকে নিয়েই সৃষ্টির লীনা। বিশেষ মনোভাব, বিশেষ হৃদয়বেগ, বিশেষ অনুভূতিকে প্রকাশ করাই হোলো আদির উদ্দেশ্য। নিবিশেষের নিহত স্বাভাবিক যেই বিশেষ দেখা দিলো অমনি ভাব এলো, রস এলো, সৃষ্টি শুরু হোলো। চিরকালের সব সফল ছেলে একটি নিবিশেষ সফলের রসাদান করে মানুষের মন তৃপ্ত নয়। সে চায় বহুভেদ পেয়ালায় ঢালো একটি রঙিন সফল, শব্দের মন-কেমন-করা উদাসী সফল, কারো মেয়ের গোমিমা দেওয়া বসার সফল, শীতের কুহে লি-মাখা সফল, ভালোবাসার আলো-ঝাঝা সফল, বিবাহের ঐশ্বর্য পশাচ পাখুর সফল, অশ্রু-সিক্ত সফল, অমিশ্র-উজ্জ্বল সফল—এই সফলগুলির প্রতিটির ব্যক্তি-স্বাতন্ত্র্য বিশেষ রস আদান করে দেয়। ভারতীয় সাংগীতের নৈরবাস্তবিক নিবিশেষের রাজ্যে বিশেষের প্রকাশ, ব্যক্তি-স্বাতন্ত্র্য অনুভূতির প্রকাশ নিয়ে হলো রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান। গান আর নৈরবাস্তবিক রইলো না। বিশেষ এল এসীম বৈচিত্র নিয়ে দেখা দিলো স্রবের রাজ্যে। গান আর নিউক স্রবের বাজনা রইলো না, গান ওরান বিশেষ মনোভাবের বাজনা হয়ে উঠলো। উঠলো আর ভৈরবী হয়ে মানলো প্রতিটি সফলের বিশেষ অমিশ্রচর্চার প্রকাশ করতে। তাই স্রবের মিশ্রণ অপরিহার্য হয়ে পড়লো। আর এই স্রবের মিশ্রণের প্রয়োজন হোলো শুধু স্রবের উদ্দেশ্য, ভাব প্রকাশের জন্যে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান আর একটা নতুন রস নিয়ে এলো আমাদের গানের এলাকার। ভারতীয় দরবারী সাংগীতে গানের স্রবের ও কথার মধ্যে অসিদ্ধা শব্দেই কোনো মিল ছিলো না। চমৎকার স্রবের সঙ্গে অতি নীরস কথার মিলন ঘটানোই ছিলো রেওয়াজ। শুধু স্রবকে দাঁড় করাবার জন্যেই গানের কথাগুলি ব্যবহার করা হতো ছিলো এতো দিন।

গানের কথার রস ও স্রবের রস, এই দুই রসের মিলন ঘটেছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানে। কবিতার রস আর স্রবের রস, এই দুটি আলাদা হলে ও এদের মিলন সম্ভব। তবে সব মিলনের মতো এ মিলনও তিনিই ঘটতে পারেন যিনি প্রজাপতি অখাণ্ড যন্ত্র। রবীন্দ্রনাথ সাংগীতে গানের কথা আর গানের স্রব, এ দুটির কোনোটিই আয়-বিজ্ঞপ্তির অহংকারে কুকচির পরিচয় দেয় নি। কথা স্রবকে অবজ্ঞা করে নি, স্রবও কথাকে অবহেলা করে আপনার পাখিকার অসচ্ছতি প্রকাশ করে নি।

কোনো ক্ষেত্রেই সংস্কারকে সম্পূর্ণ বর্জন করা সম্ভব নয়, উচিতও নয়। সাংগীতের ক্ষেত্রে সেই একই কথা প্রযোজ্য। রাগরাগিণীর এলাকার সম্পূর্ণ বাইরে গিয়ে তো স্রবসৃষ্টি হয় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কথার—“যতো দৌরাগ্রহে করি না কেন, রাগরাগিণীর এলাকা একেবারে পার ছোতে পারি নে। দেখলাম তাদের খাঁচামি এড়ানো চলে কিং বাসামি তার বজায় থাকে। আমার বিশ্বাস এই রকমই চলে। কেন না আদির পায়ের বেড়িটাই দোখের, কিং তার চরার বাঁধা-পাখির তাকে ধরে না।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম যুগের গানে যদিও বিষয়ের দিক থেকে বৈচিত্র্য ছিলো অকুণ্ঠ, কিং সে গানগুলি স্রবের দিক থেকে দরবারী সাংগীতের স্রবের ঠাঁটির মতোই বদ্ধ ছিলো। বাগেশ-বাহার তেওরা গালে ‘খানির মিলন লাগি তুমি’, বেহাগ চোতালে ‘ভয় হতে তব অতন মারে’, আশাবরী রাপ গালে ‘মনমোহন গ্রহন যামিনী শেষে’, কানোড়া চোতালে ‘ছেরি অহরহ তোনানি বিনহ ভুবনে’, ঐরাগ তেওরা ‘কার মিলন চাও বিনহী’, বড়লগ্ন যার চোতালে ‘তারে স্মরণি করে চক্ৰতপন’, আড়ানা চোতালে ‘বাণী তব বার’,—এইগুলি হচ্ছে এই পর্যায়ের কতকগুলি গান।

প্রচলিত রাগরাগিণী দিয়ে সব অনুভূতি প্রকাশ করা সম্ভব নয়, এইটে অনুভব করছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। এমন অনেক অনুভূতির সন্ধান পেলেন কবি যাদের ঐশ্বর্য, প্রতীকতা ও চমৎকারিত্ব করা পড়ছিলোনা চলতি রাগরাগিণী দিয়ে। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ অনুভূতিগুলির পূর্ণ প্রকাশের তাগিদে নতুন স্রব সৃষ্টির দিকে মন দিলেন। বলছি বাজলো যে রাগরাগিণীর মিশ্রণ থেকেই নতুন নতুন স্রবের সৃষ্টি। তাই ঠাঁটি ও মিশ্রণ সম্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাবনা-গুলি আমাদের জন্য দরকার। তিনি বলছেন “গানের জীব-কোষ হচ্ছে কয়েকটি বিশেষ স্রবের মিলন। এই সব দানা-বাঁধা স্রবগুলিকে নানা আকারে সাজিয়ে রচয়িতা গান বাঁধেন। এমনি করেই সকল দেশের গানেই আপনিই কতকগুলি স্রবের ঠাঁটি তৈরী হয়ে ওঠে। সেই ঠাঁটিগুলিকে নিয়েই গান তৈরী হয়।” রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলছেন—“এই ঠাঁটিগুলির সাহায্যের উপরেই গান-রচয়িতার স্বাধীনতা নির্ভর করে। স্রবের ঠাঁটিগুলি ইঁটের মতো হলেই তাদের দিয়ে ব্যক্তিগত বিশেষ প্রকাশ করা যায়। দেয়াল, কিংবা আশ্রয় মন্ডলের মতো হলেই তাদের দিয়ে জাতিগত সাধারণতাই প্রকাশ করা যায়।” প্রতিটি অনুভূতির ‘জাতিগত সাধারণতা’ নয়, তার ‘ব্যক্তিগত বিশেষত্ব’ কাকিয়ে তোলবার জন্যে রাগরাগিণীগুলোকে ভেঙ্গে চুরে স্রবের টুকরোগুলোকে নব নব স্রব-রূপে বিকশিত করতে হবে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের কথায় “আমাদের দেশের গানের ঠাঁটি এক একটা বড়ো বড়ো ফালি, তাইকেই বলে রাগিণী। আজ সেই ফালিগুলোকে ভেঙ্গে-চুরে সেই উপকরণে নিজের ইচ্ছামত কোঠা গড়বার চেষ্টা চলছে।”

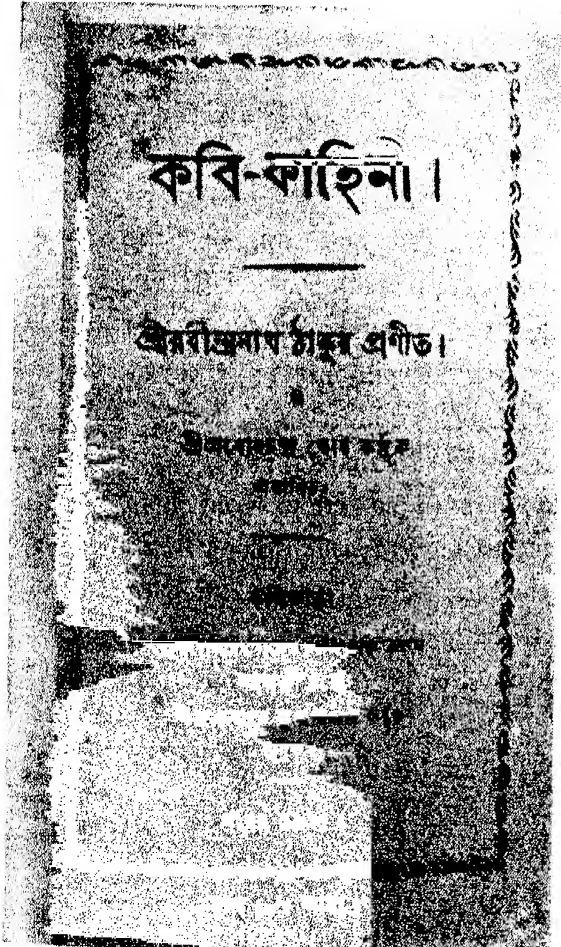
কিন্তু এই ভাঙ্গা-গড়ার স্বাধীনতা, নব নব স্রব-সৃষ্টির জন্যে

POET IN
1886



১২৯৩-এ কবি

Title page of the first printed book of Poems
(1878)



এই কাহিনী কাব্যই আমার রচনাবলীর মধ্যে প্রথম গ্রন্থ
আকারে বাহির হয়। আমি যখন মেজদাদার নিকট
আমোদাবাদে ছিলাম তখন আমার কোনো উৎসাহী বন্ধু এই
বইখানি ছাপাইয়া আমার নিকট পাঠাইয়া দিয়া আমাকে
বিস্মিত করিয়া দেন।

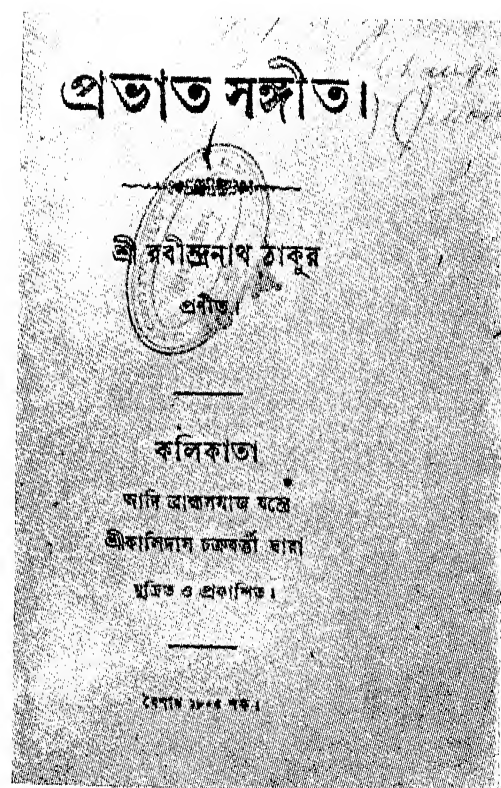
—জীবনস্মৃতি (১০৮ পৃঃ)



১২৯১-এ কবি

POET IN
1884

Title page of 1st Edition of the 'Provat
Sangeet' (1884)



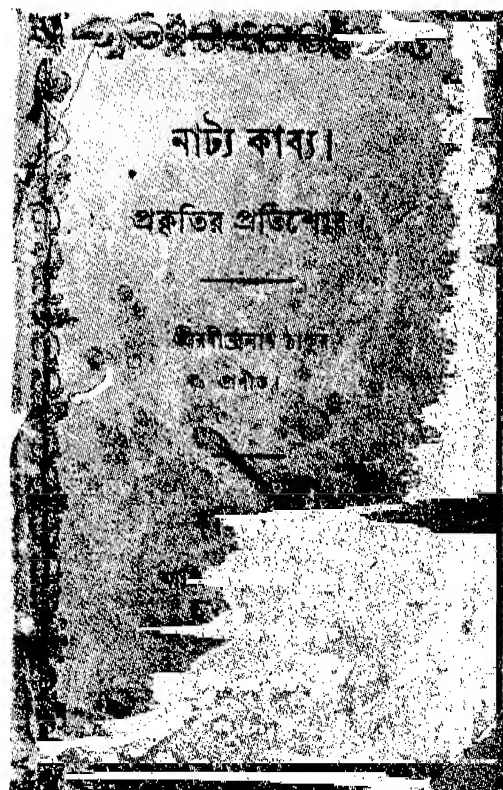
প্রথম সংস্করণের
নাম পত্র
১২৯১



রবীন্দ্রনাথ—১২২২

TAGORE IN
1885

Title page of 1st Edition of 'Prakitir
Pratisodh' (1884)



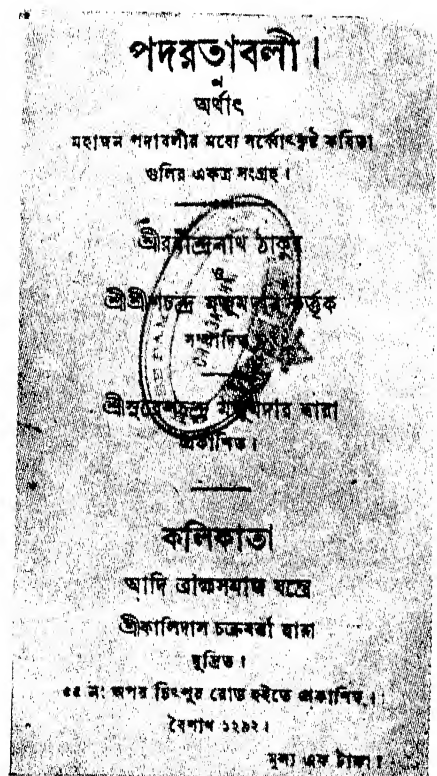
সন ১২২১

WITH DAUGHTER
MADHURILATA & SON
(1889-90)



1885

কন্যা মাধুরীলতা ও পুত্র সহ (১৮৮৯-৯০)



১২৯২

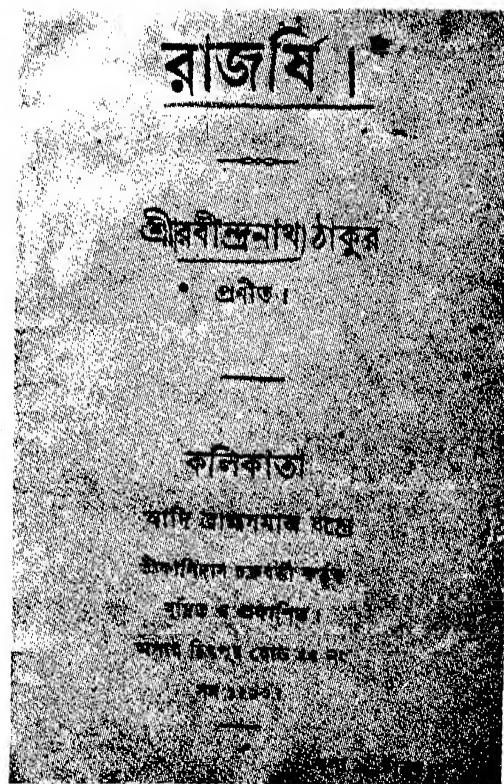
Title page of the first Edition of
'Padaratnavali'



AS VALMIKI
IN HIS OPERA
VALMIKI PRATIVA
(1881)

বাগ্মিক প্রতিভায় বাগ্মিকের ভূমিকায় কবি—১২৮৭

1887



১২৯৩

Title page of the 1st Edition of 'Rajarshi'



WITH SURENDRANATH TAGORE
IN ENGLAND (1887)

শিশু সুরেন্দ্রনাথ ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ—(১৮৮৭)

1887



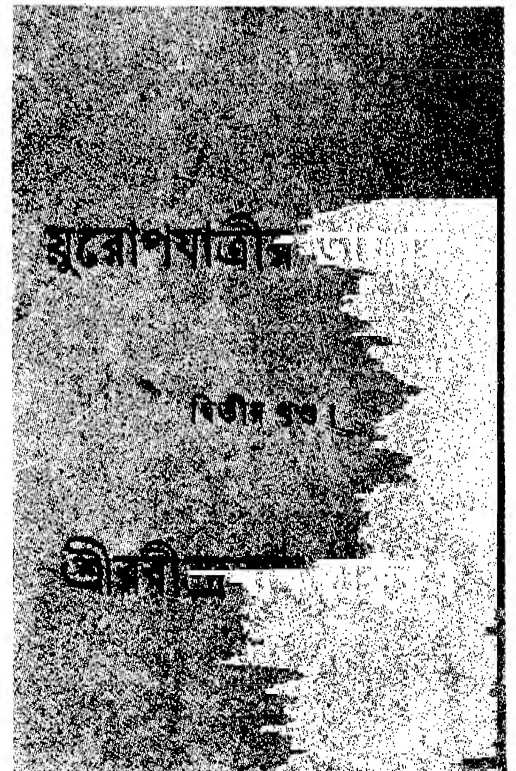
Title page of the first Edition of
'Chithi-Patra'



১২৯৭

1890

Title page of the 1st Edition of 'Europe
Yatrir Diary'



1893

প্রথম সংস্করণের নামপত্র

WITH HIS FRIEND
PHILOSOPHER & GUIDE
SRI PRIYANATH SEN



বন্ধু প্রিয়নাথ সেন সহ (১৮৮২)

Title page of the 1st Edition 'Sandhya
Sangeet' (1882)



১২৮৮

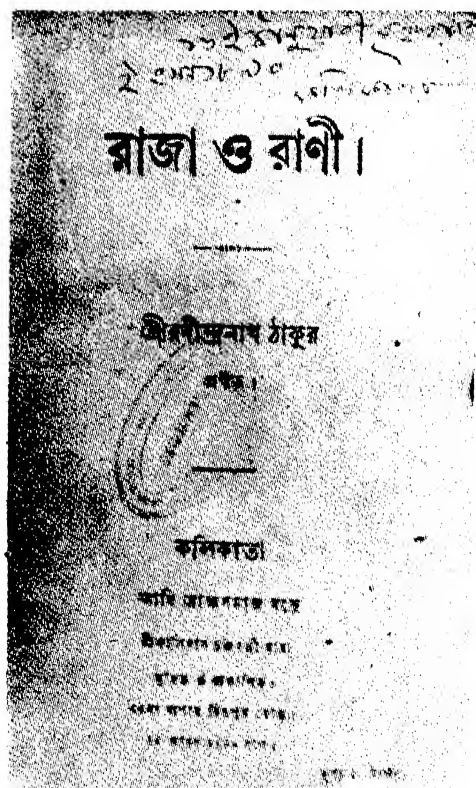
'সন্ধ্যা সঙ্গীত' রচনার (১৮৮২) ছাড়াই আমি এমন একজন
বন্ধু পাইয়াছিলাম যাহার উৎসাহ অশুকুল আলোকের মতো
আমাকে কাব্য রচনার বিকাশ চেষ্টায় প্রাণ সঞ্চার করিয়া
দিয়াছিল। তিনি শ্রীযুক্ত প্রিয়নাথ সেন।.....

—জীবন স্মৃতি

POET IN LONDON IN 1890



Title page of the 'Raja o Rani' (1889)



বিলাতে - ১৮৯০

প্রথম সংস্করণের নামপত্র
(১৮৮৯)

POET IN
1908



কবি - (১৯০৮)

Title page of 1st Edition of 'Choto Galpa'
(1894)



প্রথম সংস্করণের নামপত্র
(১৯০০ সাল)

স্বরের উপাদানগুলিকে ভেদেচুরে নানাভাবে যাচ্ছিলে নেবার স্বাধীনতা স্বেচ্ছাচারিতা নয়। রাগরাগিণীর ঠাঁইগুলিকে ভেদে ফেলে তাদের টুকরোগুলোকে মন্থন করে যাচ্ছিলে স্বরের নতুন জীবকোষ তৈরী করার যে চেষ্টাই আমরা করি না কেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাষায়, “সেই টুকরাগুলি যতই টুকরা হোক তাদের মধ্যে সেই আশু জিনিষটার একটা ব্যঙ্গনা আছে।” এই ‘আশু জিনিষটার ব্যঙ্গনা’র অনুভূতিই হোবো সুর-মিশ্রণ-তন্ত্রের সার কথা। যিনি টুকরোর মধ্যে আশু জিনিষটা দেখতে পান না, তিনি মিশ্রণের অর্থাৎ নতুন সুর-সৃষ্টির অধিকারী নন। রূপের অখণ্ড ও সমগ্র অনুভূতি, শ্রাব্য অনুভূতি ও মূর্ত্তিমার জ্ঞান—এই হচ্ছে নতুন সুর-সৃষ্টির পক্ষে অপরিহার্য।

কি ‘অপূর্ণ নিপুণতার সঙ্গেই না রবীন্দ্রনাথ সুরের মিশ্রণ পাচ্ছিলেন! তার প্রসিদ্ধ গান ‘আছে দুখ, আছে দুখ’ গানটি দেখুন। ‘গানটি আশাবরী, ললিত, নামকেনি ও বিভাসের মিলনের ফল। এমন সৃষ্টির নিপুণতা যে গানটিতে কোনো একটি রাগকে আলাদা করে বহবার যো নেই। মনে হচ্ছে, দুখা একটিকে বনেছি, দেখি, অমনি সে মরে গেছে। শুদ্ধ ‘কা’ ও শুদ্ধ ‘নি’র আশেপাশে আনাগোনা নেই, বিভাস রূপহীন, অখণ্ড কতকগুলি সুর আছে বিভাসের প্রতিনিমি হয়ে। নামকেনি লুকিয়ে ফুটেছে দরবিননায়ে। ‘কুণ্ডল কোণে’ কথাগুলির সুর ললিতকে প্রকাশ করেছে। আর সব চাপিয়ে আছে আশাবরী। ভীমপল্লীর সঙ্গে মূলভাসের মিশ্রণে অনেক গান রচনা করেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, যেমন, ‘দুখা বেনা বহে যায়’, ‘আমার সকল দুখের প্রদাপ ফেলে’, ‘নাহি বস নাহি’, ‘আকাশে আজ কোন চরণের আধা বাওরা’ প্রভৃতি গানগুলি। সাত্ত্ব, ময়ূরী ও কান্ডার মিশ্রণ তিনি ঘটিয়েছেন ‘চক্ষে আমার তুমি’ গানটিতে। মীড় ও মূর্ত্তনার ঠাসতুনি নেই ‘গানটিতে, আকস্মিক পদবিন্যাসের খেলা বরা দিয়েছে এর হৃদয়-রচনা করে। তিলক কামোদ ও দেশ, এই দুটি রাগের সঙ্গে মম্বারের মিশ্রণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের এক অনবদ্য সৃষ্টি। ‘বাড়ি যায় উড়ে যায় গো’ গানটি এই তিন রাগের বিশেষায়ত্বময়। ‘আমি তোমার সঙ্গে বেঁধেছি আমার গান’ গানটির সুরে পঞ্চমের সঙ্গে বাহার মতো মিলেছে। ললিতের ‘আমোদ ও লেগেছে’ সপনিহত। সোহিনীর সঙ্গে পঞ্চমের মিলন হয়েছে ‘আজি করিমণ মুখরিত’ গানটিতে। এ সকল মিশ্রণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের আদ্যে একই কথনো করেন নি। কি অনুপম এই মিশ্রণ! এ সকল অক্ষুরূপ উপহার দেওয়া যেতে পারে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সুর-সৃষ্টি।

ভারতবর্ষের নানা প্রদেশের নানা সুরের গান রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভেঙেছেন। শুধু ভারতবর্ষের নানা প্রদেশের সুরে কেন, পাশ্চাত্য সংস্কৃতির সুরও গান বেঁধেছেন তিনি। বা-মীকিপ্রতিভার কালী কালী বকো রে ‘আহ’ গানটি, আর ‘কুলে কুলে ললে ফলে’ ও ‘পুরানো সেই দিনের কথা’ প্রভৃতি গান পাশ্চাত্য গানের সুরের ছাঁচে লালিত-করা।

ভারতবর্ষের অন্য প্রদেশগুলি থেকে যেসব সুর আহরণ করে গান বেঁধেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ তার মধ্যে উত্তরবঙ্গের, মধীশূরী ভঙ্গনের সুরে ‘আনন্দলোকে মন্দানালোকে’, মাদ্রাসী গানের সুরে ‘সীতাঞ্চল চায়’ ও শিব ভঙ্গনের সুরে ‘বাহে বাহে রমা বাঁধা’ গানগুলি।

হিন্দী গানও অনেক ভেঙেছেন, যেমন মিশ্রাকি মম্বারের সুরে ‘খাখা কোখা যে উবাও হোবো’ ‘অপূর্ণ গানটি। মিশ্রাকি ভাষার রাগ-গুচ্ছতা ঘূচিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই ‘গানটির কয়েক

ছায়ণায় কোমল নি, কোমল দা, নি, পা, এই স্বরগুলি ব্যবহার করেছেন। তাতে গুচ্ছতা-বিশারদ ওগাদদের মনে বিতৃষ্ণা জাগিয়েছেন হয়তো, কিন্তু সুরটি অপূর্ণ হয়েছে। লক্ষ্যে অঞ্চলের ঝুরি চালের গানের সুরে বেঁধেছেন ‘তুমি কিছু দিয়ে যাও’। কাকি সুরের হিন্দী গান ভেঙে এসেছে ‘অশ্রুভরা বেদনা’ আর ভৈরবী সুরে পাখা মীরাসিরের একটি গানের সুরে পিলু আর বারোখা মিশিয়ে বেঁধেছেন ‘কখন দিলে পরায়ে’। টপ্পা ও মহা-কবির প্রসাদ লাভে বঞ্চিত হগনি। তবে রবীন্দ্রনাথ মিদুবাবুর টপ্পার চেয়ে পরিণিত তানের, চিকণ ও স্বর কাছের শোরীর টপ্পার বরণ বেশী পছন্দ করতেন। টপ্পার সুরে বেঁধেছেন—‘বন্ধু রহ রহ থাকে’, ‘হৃদয়বাগনা পূর্ণ হোবো’, ‘কে বসিলে আজি হৃদয় আসনে’, ‘এ পরবাসে বসে কে’ প্রভৃতি গানগুলি।

দেশবিদেশের বহু গানের সুর চয়ন করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ গান রচনা করেছেন, কিন্তু এই প্রসঙ্গে একটি জিনিষ যেন আমরা বশনো ভুলে না যাই যে তিনি শকল-বিশ ছিহেন না, অর্থাৎ যা পেলেন তাই গ্রহণ করে দিলেন এই গোঁমানি তিনি কখনো করেন নি। যা নিয়েছেন তার সঙ্গে তার প্রাণের সুরের দু একটি সুর মিলিয়ে তার নিজের অন্তর—ঐশ্বর্যের রঙ মিশিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাকে সত্য করে গ্রহণ করেছেন। নিজের রঙ ও সুর না মেশালে কোনো কিছুকেই নিজের করে নেওয়া যায় না। উদাহরণ স্বরূপ দেখুন বাহার রাগের ‘আজ বহিছে বসন্ত পবন জুমন্’ গানটি। এটি হিন্দী গান ভাঙা। ‘গানটি মূলত বাহার রাগে হলেও রবীন্দ্রনাথ গানটির ছায়ণায় ছায়ণায় এমন দু-একটি স্বর-যোজনা করেছেন যেগুলি রাগের দিক থেকে বিচার করলে গুচ্ছ বাহারে লাগে না। এখন যদি কোনো ওগাদ ‘আজি বহিছে বসন্ত পবন জুমন্’ গানটিতে গুচ্ছ বাহারের রূপ ফোঁসবার জন্যে মরিয়া হয়ে নেমে পড়েন তাহা তাকে বোঝাতে না পারলেও সাধারণ মানুষকে এটা সহজেই লোকাণো যাবে যে গানের সুরকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ব্যবহার করেছেন গানের কথা ভাবটি কুণির তোলবার জন্যে। রাগ-রাগিণীর রূপ ফোঁসবার জন্যে সুরকে তিনি কখনো ব্যবহার করেন নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের কথায়—“যদি মধ্যমের স্থানে পঞ্চম দিলে ভালো ওনার আর তাতে বর্ণনীয় ভাবের সহায়তা করে তবে অপ্রজ্ঞস্তু বাচুন বা মরুন, আমি পঞ্চমকে বাহাল রাখিব না কেন?”

তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথের হিন্দী-ভাঙা গানগুলিতে গুচ্ছ রাগ রূপ কুণির তোলবার অমার্জনীয় প্রয়াস থেকে আনন্দের বিরত থাকা উচিত। রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের সুরগুলির বিশেষত্ব লোপ করে তাদের সাধারণ করে তাতে তোলবার চেষ্টা করলে সুরগুলির অনন্যসামর্থ্যতা নষ্ট করা হবে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানে তান যোজনা সম্বন্ধেও সেই একই কথা বাক্য। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তানের দীর্ঘ শিলাশি পছন্দ করতেন না। চিকণ কাছের স্বর তান, এই ছিলো তাঁর পছন্দ। গানের একটা অংশ হচ্ছে রসায়ক বাব। সেই বাবগুলিকে ভেঙে চুরে তাদের অংশ নিয়ে সেপেরোয়া ব্যবহার করা যায় না। তাতে রসের ব্যঘাত ঘটে। তান হচ্ছে সুরের অলংকার। অলংকার পরতে জানা চাই, পরাতে জানা চাই। মাত্রাবোধ না থাকলে অলংকার সৌন্দর্যের হানি করে। বহু লজনা তাঁদের ললিত দেখে সেই নিপদের প্রমাণ নিরুই বহন করেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর গানগুলিতে যে স্বর তান ব্যবহার করেছেন, সেই তানগুলিকে বিস্তারিত করার

অবিকার কারো নেই। কেন না যন্ত্রের সৃষ্টির উপর হাত চালাবার অবিকার আলিপুরে মানুষের নেই। যন্ত্র তাঁর সৃষ্টির সমগ্র রূপটি করেন, তাঁর থেকেই হয়, তাঁর থেকেই সৃষ্টি। যিনি পান পান তিনি যন্ত্রাধীন যন্ত্র নন, তাই যন্ত্রের রম্যোপলব্ধি তাঁর নেই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কথায়—“যাদের শক্তি আছে তাঁরা পান নদীর আর বাদে শিক্ষা আছে তাঁরা পান পান। এরা দুই জাতের মানুষ। দৈবাৎ এদের ছোঁও মেলে.....। ফলে দাঁড়ায় এই যে, কলা-কৌশলের কলা অংশটি থাকে পান-তাঁর ভাগে আর ওস্তাদের ভাগে পড়ে কৌশল অংশটি। কৌশল ছিনিয়েটা বাদ দিয়েবেই চলে, যোনা দিয়েবে নয়। কিন্তু ওস্তাদের হাতে থাকে মিশ্রল বাউণ্ডেই থাকে। কেননা ওস্তাদ মানুষটিই মানারি, এবং মানারির পটভূমি ওখতে সব চেয়ে বড় দুর্ভাগি।”

এই কারণেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের পানে, তাঁর পানের স্রব-দেহে প্রানের স্বীকৃতি না যোগ করবার অবিকার প্রায়ককে দেওয়ার অর্থ হবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের পানকে স্রবযন্ত্র নয়, স্রব-কৌশলী প্রায়কের কৌশল দেখানোর স্রব করে তোলা।

যেমন বালা কবিতার চন্দ্রের আড়ম্বল্য দূর করেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রায়কের রাজত্ব যুগম বনকে দু মাত্রা হিসেবে ব্যবহার করে শব্দের মধুর কাকটুকু স্বনিতে বিস্তারিত করে, তেমনি নানা চন্দ্রের প্রবর্তন করে পানের স্রব-দেহকেও সাজিয়েছেন।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর উপর লক্ষ্য রেখে পানের চন্দ্র-বৈচিত্র্য সাধন করেছেন, যেমন ‘কালমুখ্যার’ ‘যার নড়ে আর নড়ে’ আর ‘বসন্ত’ প্রীতিনামের ‘বীরে বীরে বণ্ড’ পানদুর্ভিত চন্দ্রের মন্ত্রতা সৃষ্টি করেছেন তাঁর দিকে লক্ষ্য রেখে। আবার চন্দ্র ও তাঁলে উল্লাস, পৌরুষ ও উচ্ছ্বাস ফুটিয়েছেন ‘আমরা নৃতন যৌবনের দূত’, ‘হৃদয় আমার নাচেরে আজিকে’ প্রভৃতি পানে।

আবার যুক্তাক্ষরের উচ্চারণে চন্দ্র-বৈচিত্র্য সৃষ্টি করেছেন। ‘সন্থবিত্তরে দহে’, ‘গহন কুস্তম কুঙ্ক মারো’, ‘হিংসার উন্মত্ত গুপ্তী’ প্রভৃতি পান যুক্তাক্ষরের স্বনির মিশ্রণে অভিনব রূপলাভ করেছে।

কথার স্বনি-বৈচিত্র্যে চন্দ্রের বৈচিত্র্য এনেছেন, যেমন, ‘বাছোরে বাঁশরী বাজো’ পানদুর্ভিত ‘মধুকরপদ ভল-কম্পিত-চম্পক-অধনে’ এই কথাগুলির স্বনিবৈচিত্র্যের দ্বারা চন্দ্রের বৈচিত্র্য সৃষ্টি হয়েছে।

কোথাও আবার স্রবের চন্দ্রের বিভিন্ন মাত্রায় কথার নিবাসে

চন্দ্র-বৈচিত্র্য এনেছেন যেমন ‘ফু—লে ফু—লে চ—লে চ—লে’ এই তিন মাত্রার চন্দ্রের পানে মাঝের মাত্রায় বিরাম দিয়েছেন।

কথার দ্বিতীয় অক্ষরে কোঁক দেওয়া তাঁলও সৃষ্টি করেছেন, যেমন ‘তুমি তো যেই যাবেই চলে’ পানদুর্ভিত।

একই পানের নানা অংশের বিচিত্র্য ভাবগুলিকে ফুটিয়ে তোলবার জন্যে একই পানে বিভিন্ন তাঁল ব্যবহার করেছেন, যেমন ‘ঐ আসে ঐ অতি’ ও ‘হে নিরুপমা’ পানদুর্ভিত।

কোথাও আবার তাঁলের বিভিন্নতায় পানে চন্দ্র-বৈচিত্র্য এনেছেন। যেমন ‘শামল ছায়া নাই বা এলে’ পানদুর্ভিত ২।৪ মাত্রার তাঁলে, ‘কোঁপিতে দেহলতা খর খর’ এটি ৩।৪।৪ এই এগারো মাত্রা গুচ্ছের একাদশী তাঁলে, ‘জীবনমরণের সামান্য চাড়ায়ে’ ৩।২।৩ মাত্রার রূপকড়া তাঁলে, ‘ও দেখা দিয়ে যে চলে গেলে’ পানদুর্ভিত ৩।৬ মাত্রার নবতালে ও ‘যেতে যেতে একলা পথে’ পানদুর্ভিত ৩।২ মাত্রার বাম্পক তাঁলে।

ভারতীয় সংগীতের বারি অতুনিমিত্ত তত্ত্বটি সম্পূর্ণ ভাবে আয়ত্ত করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভারতীয় সংগীতের সৃষ্টি যোতুহীন বন্ধ ছিলে নতুন স্রবসৃষ্টির যোত এনেছেন। শুধু তাই নয় ভবিষ্যতে কোন দিক থেকে ভারতীয় সংগীতের বিকাশ সম্ভব তাঁরও ইঙ্গিত তিনি দিয়ে গেছেন। কিন্তু সৃষ্টির ক্ষেত্রে নতুন-কিছু-করার মেশা বড়ো সর্বমেশে মেশা। নতুন কিছু করার মন্ত্রতার নতো সৃষ্টির শক্তি খুব কমই আছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—“সৃষ্টি-শক্তিতে যখন দৈন্য ঘটে তখনই মানুষ তাঁল ঠুকে নূতনদের আয়তন করে। পুরাতনের পাত্রে নবীনতার অমরস পরিবেশন করবার শক্তি তাদের নেই, তাই তাঁরা শক্তির অপূর্ণতা চড়া গলায় প্রমাণ করবার জন্যে সৃষ্টিচাড়া অস্ত্রেরে সন্ধান করে থাকে।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—“আমি তরুণ বলব তাদেরই যাদের কল্পনার আকাশ চিরপুরাতন রাজস্রাবের অরুণবর্ণে মহাছেই নবীন, চরণ রাগবার জন্যে তাদের উষাকে নিউমার্কেন্টে ‘খুন’ ফরমাশ করতে হয় না।”

তাক-লাগানোর এই মেশার হাত থেকে আধুনিক স্রবকারেরা যেন আপনাদের বাঁচিয়ে রাখেন। তবেই রবীন্দ্র-সংগীত-বারি সমস্ত যোগ রেখে তাঁদের সঞ্জন-প্রয়াসে তাঁরা নবীনতার স্পর্শ পানেন।

ছিল যে পবনের অঙ্গনায়ে
এক যে ভুবনের আলোক-পানে।
অপন বারা টুটি বাহিরে এক টুটি
অবাক আমি টুটি তবিরে তাঁরে ॥

মানটি খেবেচিনু অশ্রুনায়ে,
তাঁরে যে বেঁবেচিনু যে নামাছারে
নীল বদনায় পূজিনু যাবে, হায়,
মিথিল তাঁরি প্রায় বন্দনারে ॥

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও শাস্তিনিকেতন

শ্রীশান্তা দেবী



শাস্তিনিকেতনের কথা খুব অল্প বয়সেই শুনেছি। কিন্তু তার সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক হয় ১৯১১ খ্রীস্টাব্দ থেকে। ১৯১৬-১৭ সাল থেকে বছর দুই শাস্তিনিকেতনেই বাস করেছি। তারপরও বহুদিন যাওয়া আসা নিয়তই ছিল।

১৯১১ খ্রীস্টাব্দে বাল্যকালে যখন আশ্রমে গিয়েছি তখন কলকাতার খুব বেশী লোক শাস্তিনিকেতনে যেতেন না। আমার পিতা এই বিদ্যালয়ের একজন বিশেষ ছিষ্টতমী ছিলেন বলে আমরা ছানতাম সেখানে কিছু দিন থেকে পাঠান আদর্শে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বৃক্ষাবদানায় চলছে, ছেলেরা তাপস বালকের মত আদ্বিক-ভাবে সেখানে বৃক্ষচর্চা পালন ও অধ্যয়নাদি করে। এরা নিরামিষ খাতির করে, পায়ে জুতা দেয় না, সূর্যোদয়ের পূর্বে শয্যা ত্যাগ করে উপাসনায় বসে, গুরুকে প্রণাম প্রণাম করে, বৃক্ষ তলে বসে পাঠাধ্যয়ন করে। অল্প বয়সে আদর্শের দিকে মানুষের মন সহজে আকর্ষিত হয়, যদি সেই রকম আবহাওয়ার মধ্যে মানুষ থাকে। কাজেই এই রকম বিদ্যালয়ের কথা শুনে এ দেবদার জন্ম আমাদের মূর্খি আগ্রহ হত। একদিন শুনলাম যেবার সেবার সময় সেখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'রাজা' নাটক অভিনীত হবে, করি স্বয়ং অভিনয়ে যোগ দেবো। আমরা যির করলাম 'রাজা' অভিনয় দেখতে যাব। তখনকার দিনে বয়স্ক মহিলারাই নিম্নস্তরে ভেঙে অস্তিত্ব ছিলেন না। কাজেই আমাদের মত কয়েকটি অল্পবয়স্ক বালিকার দল বেঁধে কোথাও যাওয়া সম্ভব ছিল না। সে প্রাথমিক আমায় পিতা রামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের একজন ঘনিষ্ঠ বন্ধু ছিলেন। তাই আমার বন্ধুরা আমার পিতাকে বলে বম্বলেন তাদের শাস্তিনিকেতনে নিয়ে যাবার জন্য। এঁকে সংক্ষেপে রাজি করা গেল। তখন আমরা মহোৎসাহে যাত্রা করলাম। এই খেবেই কলকাতার মেয়েদের আশ্রমে বেড়াতে যাওয়া শুরু হয়।

শাল ও আমলকী বাগানের ত্রি তন বোড়ে ঘরের কোণে এত বড় একটি আদর্শ নিয়ে যে বিদ্যালয় পড়ে উঠেছে একেবারে তার মাঝখানে এসে পড়ে চমকিত হয়ে পোনাম। পল্লীগ্রাম আর খড়ের মত তার আগেও অনেক দেখেছি। কিন্তু একেবারে অন্য রকম। হ্রাস্তর্গীর্ষ শালখাচের পিছনে লম্বা মান্নির ঘরে খড়ের চাল, কোথাও কোনো আবজ্ঞনা পড়ে নেই, চক্ষু কর্ণ বা নাসিকার পাড়াপাক কোনো কিছু আশেপাশে দেখা যায়না। ভোরে উঠে দেখি আর একেবারে ছেলেরা আসন হাতে করে একটি দূরে দূরে বসানে বা উপাসনায় বসতে চলেছে। বসনের পর সকলে সমবেত হয়ে পিতা মোহন 'মন্ত্র' বলছে। সবই নূতন লাগে। আহারের সময় ছেলেরা নিজে নিজে বাসন হাতে করে খেতে চলেছে, খাবার পর নিজেরাই নিজেদের বাসন মেজে ধুয়ে রাখছে। সব কাজেই ছেলেরা নিজেদের করে। এমন কি রান্না ভাঙার তদারক দলবার পালাও বড় ছেলেদের থাকে। ছেলেরা যদি কোনো দোষ করত, তবে তার শাস্তিনিবানও ছিল ছেলেদেরই উপর। তাদের বিচার সভা বসত। সভায় যা যির হত সেই মত শাস্তি হত।

সেকালের শাস্তিনিকেতন এখনকার মত বিরাট ব্যাপার ছিল না। আশ্রমপতিদের ঘিরে থাকতেন কয়েকটি অধ্যাপক সম্প্রদায়ের আর কয়েকটা বড় বড় ঘরে ছেলেরা। তখন বিশু-ভারতী গড়ে ওঠে নি, মেয়েদের শ্রীভবনও ছিল না, তবে অধ্যাপকদের মেয়েরা ছেলেদের সঙ্গে একই ক্রাশে পড়তেন। একে ক্রমে ২৪টি করে বাইরের মেয়ে আসতে থাকে। ১৯২৩শে বোম্বয় চাঃগি বাইরের মেয়ে হয়েছিল। আমিও তখন আশ্রমের ছাত্রী।

আমরা যেবার প্রথম গোনাম ১৯১১তে তখন অধ্যাপক বনতে দেখেছিলাম ক্রিষ্টিমোহন সেন শাস্ত্রী, জগদানন্দ বায়, নেপাল চন্দ্র বায়, কালীমোহন সোয়, অজিতকুমার চক্রবর্তী, যদুপ্রসাদ চন্দ্র মজুমদার, হরিচরণ বসুপাধ্যায় এবং আর কয়েকজনকে। তখন অধ্যাপকদের গুরুপল্লী ছিল না। ছাত্রদের ঘরের কাছেই ২৪টি কুন্দির এক একখানা ঘর নিয়ে এঁরা কেউ একলা কেউ বা সম্প্রদায়ের বাস করতেন। জগদানন্দ বাবু মত দুই একজনের আলাদা কুন্দিরও ছিল। মনে হচ্ছে আশ্রমের রান্নাবন খেতে অধ্যাপকদের খাবার আসত, বাড়ীতে বোম্বয় বেশী রান্না করত হত না। রান্নাও এতাহ সাধারণ। বেলাপূর্বের বাজারে বা শাস্তিনিকেতনের আশে পাশে তরিতরকারি বিশেষ পাওয়া যেত না। ডাল আর দুই রকম আলুর তরকারি এই ছিল সর্বসার খাবার। সঙ্গে দুই দুই একটি খাক্ত। আশ্রমবাসী বা প্রতিটি অভ্যর্থতার এতে কিছু দুঃখ দেখা যেত না।

প্রথম বার 'রাজা' অভিনয় হয় মান্নির 'মাটির ঘরে'। বড়ের চালার তলায় রঙ্গমঞ্চ। নবীন কিশোর ও যদ্যতোলা পুষ্পননে বলমল করছে। গান ও অভিনয় সেন আত্মসম্মতির কুলের মত চারিদিকে ছড়িয়ে পড়ছিল। কলকাতার ছেলেমেয়েরা যারা খিয়েলির আগে দেখেছে তাদের দেখা অভ্যাস ছিল বিরাট হৈছে ঘরবাড়ী মন্দির পল্লত আঁকা চিত্রিত পটের সামনে শয়মা চুম্বক শোভিত পোষাক পরে নটনমীদের অভিনয়। কিন্তু এখানে দেখলাম নূতন রকম অভিনয় পদ্ধতি। রঙ্গমঞ্চ বলতে পুষ্পপল্লব শোভিত উঁচু একটি দাওয়ার মত জায়গা। অভিনেতাদের পোষাক হাল্কা রঙের হাল্কা কাপড় চোপড়। যারা রাজা সেজেছেন তাদের সাফপোষাক মূল্যবান, কিন্তু সেকালের খিয়েলির ওরান্না। এ সব দেখলে বিশেষ মূল্য দিতেন না। আদম্বরের অভাব, কিন্তু প্রাণের প্রাচুর্য। গুরু ও শিষ্যদের মধ্যে সম্পর্কও একটা নূতন দেখা গেল। একই সঙ্গে দুই দলই অভিনেতা, অথচ তার জন্য আদর্শতা নেই। কলকাতায় তখনও গান জিনিসটা বিশেষ দিনে বিশেষ সময়ে শোনাই মানুষের অভ্যাস ছিল। কিন্তু শাস্তিনিকেতনের গানই ছিল প্রাণ। তাই অভিনয়ে ছেলেদের গানও বাহিরের শ্রোতাদের সব চেয়ে বেশী চমক দিয়েছিল।

তার বহুদিন পরে বার বার কলকাতায় শাস্তিনিকেতনের দল 'বর্ষানন্দন' 'মাধোৎসব' প্রভৃতি গান শুনিবে শহরের

মানুষদের একটি সচেতন করে তোলেন। তাই আজ পাড়ায় পাড়ায় গানের স্কুল আর তাদের নাচ গানের উৎসব। যে সব উৎসবে পোষাক আর অভিনয় সবই সেই শাহিনিকেতনের ট্যাচ লাগে হয়ে যাচ্ছে। 'আজকের কলকাতায়' এগুলি আর নূতন নেই, কিন্তু পকাশ বৎসর আগে এগুলি ছিল অজানা। তখন স্কুলে ছেলেমেয়েরা দিলাঠি ছিল আর ইংরাজি কবিতা আবৃত্তি চাড়া আর কিছু উৎসবের আয়োজন সহজ করতে পারত না। দুই একটা স্কুলে ভাল গাইয়ে কোনো ছেলেমেয়ে থাকলে তাকে দিয়ে একটা দুটো গান করানো হত। কিন্তু এরকম গানের যোগ্যতা তখন ছিল না।

আশ্রমে যে যুগে মেয়েদের পার্টি ছেলেরাই করতেন। 'রাজা' নাকি দুটি মাত্র রাণী চরিত্র সন্দর্শনা ও স্তব্ধতা। রাণী স্তব্ধতা সাজে ছিলেন স্তব্ধাঙ্গন দাস, আজ যিনি আশ্রমের উপাচার্য। তিনি তখন চাচা ছিলেন। অধ্যাপক অতিথিকুমার চক্রবর্তীও একবার রাণী সাজেন।

এরপর 'শারদোৎসব' 'অচলায়তন' প্রভৃতি অভিনয়ে ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে অন্যান্য অধ্যাপকদের অভিনয় করতে সবার দেখেছি। শ্রীমুখ জগদানন্দ রায় ছিলেন গণিতজ্ঞ ও দৈর্ঘ্যবান। কিন্তু আজ অনেকেই জানেন না যে তিনি একজন স্তব্ধ অভিনেত্রী ছিলেন। জগদানন্দ বাবু 'রাজা' 'শারদোৎসব' 'অচলায়তন' প্রভৃতি অনেক নাটকেই অংশ গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। হাস্যরসাত্মক অভিনয়েই ত্রিহার নাম ছিল বেশী। যদিও তিনি জানতেন ছিলেন কড়া মাদার।

ফিজিওমোহন বাবুও অনেক অভিনয়ে অংশ গ্রহণ করতেন। একবার বোধহয় 'অচলায়তন' নাটকে তিনি যে অংশ গ্রহণ করেন তাতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ফিজিওমোহন বাবুকে প্রশংসা করেন। অভিনয়ের মধ্যে হলেও এই দৃশ্যলিতে 'অনেকে চমকিত হয়ে যান।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ অগ্রে যেকালে তাঁর প্রায় সব নাটকেই অংশ গ্রহণ করতেন। 'রাজা'তে তিনি হন প্রকাশের 'সাক্ষরদাস'। কিন্তু 'রাজা' রূপেও তিনিই অহরহ থেকে কথা বলেন, কারণ যে 'রাজা'কে চোখে দেখা যায় না। রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে নৃত্যকলাতেও পার্শ্ব তা আমরা এই সব অভিনয়েই আদিকার করলাম। অভিনয়ের পর কোন কোন বালক নৃত্যদর্শন পরীক্ষা তাঁর মত পোষাক করে তাঁর মত নাচবার চেষ্টা করতে দেখেছি।

অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রেই তিনি বৃদ্ধের অংশ গ্রহণ করতেন। কেবল একবার 'রাগসি'তে 'হুগুয়া'ই দেখেছিলেন একবারে তত্পরমুগ্ধিত। যে মুহূর্তে যাক দেখেছেন তাঁরা ভুলবেন না। সবার বিষয় 'হুগুয়া'ই রূপে তাঁর চরিত্র এখনও দেখা যায়। এচাড়া একবার 'তপস্বী'তে তিনি রাজা সাজেন। সে রাজাও অল্পবয়স্ক। ১৯১৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে যখন কলকাতায় 'কাস্তুরী' অভিনয় হয়, তখন তখন ভূমিকা স্বরূপ 'বৈরাগ্যাবান' নামে আর একটি ছোট অভিনয়ও হয়েছিল। তাতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ হয়েছিলেন 'কবিশেখর'। কবি যে কবি হবেন তাতে আশ্চর্য কিছু নেই। কিন্তু এ কবি তরুণ কবি, সাজে সজ্জায় কোনও বৈরাগ্য নেই। কবিশেখরের মতো রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আবিষ্কার করতে অনেকেরই সময় লেগেছিল। যুগপৎ আনন্দ ও বিষময় তাঁদের চমকিত করেছিল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের মত শক্তিশালী পুরুষ স্রষ্টাচিত নাটকীয় অভিনয় নৈপুণ্য দেখাবেন এতে বিস্মিত হবার কিছু নেই। তিনি বালক

বয়স থেকেই 'বাল্মীকি-প্রতিভা' প্রভৃতিতে খ্যাতি অর্জন করে ছিলেন। কিন্তু মানুষ বিস্মিত হ'ত তাঁর সর্বতোমুখী প্রতিভা দেখে। সাহিত্যের সর্বক্ষেত্রেই তিনি যখন স্রষ্টাশক্তি, কাব্য, গানে, গল্পে, উপন্যাসে, প্রবন্ধে তাঁর নাম যখন সাহিত্যিকদের মাগালেরও বহু উর্দ্ধে তখন তিনি শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে অবতীর্ণ হলেন। প্রথমে নিজের পুত্র ও বন্ধুপুত্রদের নিয়েই তাঁর পিতৃদেবের এই আশ্রমে বৃক্ষচর্চাশ্রমের সূত্রপাত তিনি করেন। তারই বোধহয় ১৯১২ বৎসর পরে আমরা শাহিনিকেতন প্রথম দেখি।

এরই ভিতর এই শিক্ষালয়ের জন্য কত পরিশ্রম, কত তাগত স্রাবণ, কত মানুষগড়ার কাজ যে তিনি করেছেন তা ভাবলে বিস্মিত হতে হয়। গল্প উপন্যাস থেকে যে কালে একালের মত টাকা পাওয়া যেত না। অধিকাংশ লেখাই লেখকরা বিনা পরিশ্রমে দিতেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাগ্যও অনেক স্থানেই তাই ছিল। 'চাচা' তখন তিনি তাঁর নব পর্যায়ের বৃক্ষদর্শনেই 'চোখের বালি' 'দোকানু' লিখেছিলেন। এরই কিছুদিন পরে প্রবাসী সম্পাদক প্রেরিত তিনশত টাকা বিদ্যালয়ের কাজের জন্য পেয়ে তিনি 'গোরা' লিখতে শুরু করেন। কবির সব লেখার টাকা বিদ্যালয়ের জন্যই খরচ হত। সে টাকা তখন বেশী ছিল না। কাজেই আশ্রমপতি ও অধ্যাপকরাও সর্বদাই ব্যয়সংকল্প করে চলেত হত। আশ্রমের চেয়ে আদর্শ তখন অনেক বড় ছিল। শুধু যে মান্নি ঘরে বাস আর গাছতলায় অবসর চলত তা নয়। গাড়া বোড়া আলোপাখারও কোনো সমারোহ ছিল না। রবীন্দ্রনাথ পারে হেঁটেই সর্বত্র ঘুরতেন। নিতান্ত বেশী দূর হলে বা অন্য কারণে যানের প্রয়োজন হলে গরুর গাড়ী ছিল সম্ভব। তখন বর্ষভর আলোই সর্বত্রের ঘরে আলত। আশ্রমে বাসকালে দেখছি কবির ঘরে ছোট একটি কেরামিনের আলো সারা রাতই জ্বলছে। পাখা ওই প্রচণ্ড গ্রীষ্মের দেশেও কবির ঘরে চলত না। কবি ত হাতপাখাও রাখতেন না।

আশ্রমের কাজের জন্য কেরামী রাখবার পরমা না থাকায় তৎকালীন সর্বসাধারণ বলেন কনি অগ্রে কেরামী রাখাও করেছেন।

তিনি আশ্রমের ছেলেদের সাপ্তাহিক উপাঙ্গনায় মন্দিরে আচার্যের কাজ ত বরাবরই করেছেন। তাঁর উপরে ছেলেদের সভাসমিতির অস্থ ছিল না। বেশীর ভাগই সাহিত্যসভা। এই সব সাহিত্যসভায় শিশুদের সাহিত্য-আলোচনা ও রচনা-পাঠ ইত্যাদি হত। তাতে গুরুদেবকে না হলে চলত না। তাঁর কাজ কিন্তু এইখানেই শেষ নয়, অধ্যাপকদের কাজের জন্য বই তৈরী করা, তাঁদের অনুবাদ সংশোধন করে দেওয়া এবং এমন কি ছেলেদের ইংরাজি ক্লাশ পড়ানো এসব কাজও তিনি দীর্ঘদিন ধরে করেছেন। যখন ইউরোপ আমেরিকায় চলে যেতেন তখনও তাঁর মন পাড়ে থাকত আশ্রমের কাজে। সেখানে কি অভাব অনাটন হচ্ছে এই চিন্তা তাঁকে সর্বদা ঘিরে থাকত।

এখনকার দিনের স্কুল কলেজের বেতনের সঙ্গে তখনকার তুলনা করা ঠিক নয়। তবু যে বিদ্যালয়ে বাসস্থান এবং আহার দুই পাওয়া যায় তাঁর বেতন তখনও কম হলে চলত না। তবু যে যুগে আশ্রমবালকদের বেতন ছিল ১৮ টাকা মাত্র। বাংলা ১৩১৯ সালে যখন কবি ইলিনয়ে (U.S.A.) ছিলেন যে সময় বিদ্যালয়ে অর্থসঙ্কট হয়। তবু তিনি সকল ছাত্রের নিকট ২০ টাকা বেতন দাবী করেন নি। তিনি নূতন ছাত্রদের বেতন ২০ টাকা করার প্রস্তাব করেন, কিন্তু পুরাতন ছাত্রদের বিষয়

অধ্যাপকদের সভা রামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায়কে লেখেন, “বর্তমানে যে সকল ছাত্র আছে তাহাদের অভিভাবকেরা ইচ্ছা পূর্বক ২০৮ টাকা বেতন যদি না দেন তবে তাহাদিগকে রাখিতেই হইবে।”

অধ্যাপকদের বেতনের বিষয়ও চিন্তার কারণ হয়ে ওঠে। কিন্তু তিনি বলেন, “বিদ্যালয়ের পক্ষ হইতে অধ্যাপকদের বেতন কম করিবার প্রস্তাব করা আমি ঠিক মনে করি না। কিন্তু তাঁহারা ইচ্ছাপূর্বক নিজে হইতে কিছু কি তাগ করিবার কথা বলিতে পারেন না? উঁহাদের মধ্যে কেহ একজন দৃষ্টান্ত দেখাইলে পথ সঙ্গল হইতে পারে।

“আমি জানি না আমাদের বিদ্যালয়ের বেতনের হার অন্যত্র অপেক্ষা বেশি কিনা, কিন্তু আমি উঁহাদের কাছারও কাছে কিছু দাবি করিতে পারি না। তাগ করিবার দাবি একমাত্র আমারই উপর আছে—বিদ্যালয়ের আইডিয়া আমাকেই ডাক দিয়াছিল অতএব যথার্থভাবে আমারই গরজ। যতক্ষণ আমার কিছু মাত্র সামর্থ্য আছে ততক্ষণ আমি অন্যের কাছে হাত পাতিতে পারি না। অতএব বিদ্যালয়ের অন্যান্য যাহা কিছু ঘনিষ্ঠে তাহার মূলে আমারই অপরাধ আছে—যেজন্য আমি অনেকে দণ্ডনীয় করিব কি করিয়া?”

১৯১৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন Nobel পুরস্কার পান, তখন তিনি ছিলেন ঋণগ্রস্ত, বিদ্যালয়েরই জন্য। নোবেল পুরস্কারের সমস্ত টাকাই তিনি বিদ্যালয়কে দান করেন। বিদ্যালয়ের ঋণের জন্য “পাঠসংগ্রহ” নামে একটি স্কুল পাঠ্য বই দাঁড় করিয়ে তিনি কিছু অর্থ সংগ্রহ করবেন মনে করেছিলেন। কিন্তু নোবেল পুরস্কারের আগে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় রবীন্দ্রনাথের বচনকে বিশেষ দাম দিতেন না। “পাঠসংগ্রহ” চলল না। এতই কিছুদিন পরে এল নোবেল প্রাইজ। বিদ্যালয়ের একটা ভরসা হল।

নোবেল প্রাইজের পর রবীন্দ্রনাথের যে বিরাট সম্বর্দ্ধনা হয় তাতে তাঁর বড় অনুরাগী গিয়েছিলেন যারা চিরদিনই তাঁকে ভালবেসেছেন। অগ্রণীদের মধ্যে ছিলেন জগদীশ চন্দ্র বসু, রামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায় প্রভৃতি। কিন্তু আরও এমন অনেকে গিয়েছিলেন যাদের অনুরাগের কোনো পরিচয় এতদিন কবির পান নি। তাঁর সাহিত্যিক জীবনে তিনি অনেক বিরুদ্ধ ও কঠিন সমালোচনা শুনেছিলেন আচ্ছ এতবড় সম্মানের দিনে সেই বেদনার কথা তাঁর মনে বড় হয়ে জেগে উঠল। তিনি যখন সম্বর্দ্ধনার উত্তর দিলেন তখন বন্ধুদের সম্মানকে বড় করে না দেখে বিরোধীদের মতন রূপকেই বড় করে দেখলেন। তাঁর বন্ধুরা এই উত্তরে অত্যন্ত বাধিত হয়েছিলেন যে কথা আচ্ছও মনে পড়ে। কবি সেজন্য পরে বিশেষ বন্ধুদের বাড়ী বাড়ী গিয়ে দেখা করেন এবং বলেন “আপনাদের কথা আমি বলি নাই।”

যাই হোক, এর কিছুদিন পর হতে আশ্রমের কাছ বাড়তে

থাকে। এতদিন বাংলার ছেলেরাই ছিল এবানের ছাত্র। এরপর অন্যান্য প্রদেশের ছেলেরা আসতে থাকে। আমরা ১৯১৭ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে দেখেছি নরভূপ ও চারুদত্ত নামে দুটি নেপালী ছেলে পড়ছে। বিজয়বাহু নামে দাক্ষিণাত্যের একটি ছেলেকে মনে পড়ে, আর একজন বয়স্ক ছেলের নাম ছিল আকুরাতি চলমায়া। সেও দাক্ষিণাত্যের—কবির ও আশ্রমের খ্যাতি বহির্ভূত হতে ছড়ানোর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে নানাদেশের ছাত্রছাত্রী ও অধ্যাপক আসতে লাগলেন। এমন কি ইউরোপের লোকেরও অভাব হল না। এই সময় বাংলা ১৩২৫ সালে বিশ্বভারতী প্রতিষ্ঠা হয়। ভিত্তি স্থাপনের সময় একটি ইউরোপীয় মহিলাও সেই কাজে যোগ দিয়েছিলেন মনে আছে।

বিশ্বভারতীতে অবশ্যন অধ্যাপনা হতে আরও কয়েক মাস দেবী হয়। প্রথম দিকে দৌনেস্কনাথের বাংলা পান ও ভীমরাও শাস্ত্রীর হিন্দুস্থানী সম্বন্ধেই বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য ছিল। দুই এক বছরের মধ্যে চিত্রাঙ্কণনি স্কুল হয়ে গেল। স্কুলে বহুদিনই সরেজমিন কর চলি য়োকতেন। কিন্তু এখন অসিত কুমার হালদার ও বিশেষ করে নন্দলাল বসুর আগমনে পাকা শিল্পী পড়ে তোলার আয়োজন হল। কলাভবনের কাছে অনেক গুলি শিল্পী ছাত্র যোগ দিলেন। বাংলা ১৩২৯ সালে আমিও কিছু দিন চিত্র-বিদ্যা চার্চার জন্য কলাভবনে গিয়েছিলাম। তখন দেখেছি রমেন্দ্রনাথ চক্রবর্তী, বীরেন্দ্র দেববর্মা, মনীন্দ্র গুপ্ত, শ্রীমতী হাতী সিং, সন্নিতা ঠাকুর, ঘোরা বসু, বিনায়ক মাসোদী প্রভৃতি শিক্ষার্থী কলাভবনে কাজ করতেন। কলাভবন তখন পিরামিড সাহেবের বাংলোর দোতলায়। উঁহনি পিরামিড শাহিনিকে তন বাগের সময় এই পাকা বাড়ীটি করেন। কাঁচা কেরের বিস্তৃতির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শাহিনিকে তনের ভিতর বাহিরে অনেক পরিবর্তনই হতে লাগল। নানির বাড়ী গুলি আজ বোধহয় নিশিচয় হয়ে গেছে। পাকা বাড়ী একটি ডোমিণানি সহরের মত। গুরুদেবও আর আগেকার মত সহজলভ্য হইলেন না। একে ত দেশ বিদেশে ঘোরার জন্য একদিনা আশম বাস উঠে গেল। তার উপর বয়স বাড়, বাইরের কাজ বাড় ইত্যাদির জন্য তাঁকে এমনি পাহারা বেষ্টিত করে রাখা শুরু হল যে যারা এক সময় যে কোনো সময়ে তাঁর কাছে যেতে পারত তারাও বিনা অনুমতিতে তাঁর দর্শন পাবার কোনো আশা রাখত না। অভিমাত্রী ভক্তরা দূরে দূরেই থাকত। বুঝত পরি-বর্তনই অগ্রগতির নিয়ম। পুরাতন দূরে চলে যায় নূতন এগিয়ে আসে। একই জীবনের এক এক পর্বের এক এক রকম ছবি সংসারপটভূমিকায়।

তারপর যখন জীবন নানি শেষ হয়ে যায় তখন পুরাতন যারা ক’দিনের জন্য পিছনে পড়ে থাকে তারা যেটুকু পেয়েছিল তার জন্য নিজেদের ধনা মনে করে, যা পাশনি তার জন্য দুঃখ করেনা যদি অবশ্য অতিলাভী না হয়।

আমার বেশ মনে আছে, আমি ভূঁইয়া স্বঃ এই অংশকে অবলম্বন করিয়া মনোকে খুব প্রসারিত করিতে চেষ্টা করিতাম।
কী বৃত্তিতাম, কী ভাবিতাম তা স্পষ্ট করিয়া বলা কঠিন...

—জীবন স্মৃতি



রবীন্দ্রনাথ, গান্ধীজী ও শান্তিনিকেতন

প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়

প্রায় অর্ধ শতাব্দী পূর্বের শান্তিনিকেতন : ডাকঘর তার-ঘর নেই, ঘরও বোনপুরের। খবরের কাগজ দুই একটা আসে ডাকযোগে—আজকালকার মতো দৈনিক কাগজ ঘরে ঘরে বিলি হতো না। বাহরের অগাধ সন্ধেয়ে খবরাখবর কনই রাখতাম। শুধুও তিন দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় প্রবর্তিত বারিসাদেবের উপর যোজনাকার গ্রেপ্তার বৃত্তি ও পুণরুজ্জীবন নানাভাবে ছলুন করছে—তার প্রতিবাদ করছেন নাইরোবির এক গুফনটি বারিসাদেব নাম তাঁর মোহনদাস কনমচাঁদ গান্ধী।

আমাদের থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ দুনিয়ার খবর বেশী রাখতেন—বিদেশী পত্রিকা তিনি যথেষ্ট পড়তেন। তাই দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার সম্বাদ তিনি রাখতেন। বারিসাদেব গান্ধী সেখানে যে সত্যগ্রহণা পরামর্শে বোফিসিয়েস বলে আন্দোলন উত্থাপন করেছেন তাঁর কথা নিশ্চয়ই জেনেছিলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ কবি, গায়ক দৃষ্টিতে অনুভব করেছিলেন যে ভারতের ডানি সাত্ব্যমের মেতুৎ করবেন এক সত্যগ্রহণা সত্যগ্রহণ। তাই ১৯০৯ সালে প্রায়শ্চিত্ত নামে যে মাসিকটি লিখলেন তাতে কনকর বৈরাগ্যের এক অদ্ভুত চরিত্র সৃষ্টি করলেন—এই চরিত্র হলো যেন ডানি গান্ধীজীর প্রতীক।

দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় ভারতীয়দের প্রতি অবিচারের কথা আমরা শুনি ও পড়ে জানলাম, ভারতীয়দের অবস্থা প্রত্যেক দেখবার জন্য মহাপ্রাণীয় রাজনীতিক, ভারত সরকারের বিধান সভার সদস্য গোপালকৃষ্ণ গোখলে দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় গিয়েছিলেন।

ইতিমধ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ইংলণ্ড-আমেরিকা যখন করে এলেন : নোবেল পুরস্কার পেলেন (১৯১৩, নভেম্বর)। ভারত ও ভারতের বাইরেও রবীন্দ্রনাথকে ও তাঁর বিদ্যালয়কে জানবার জন্য উৎসুক দেখা দিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে বিলাতে বেড়াতে গি. এফ. এড্‌লি নামে দিল্লী সেন্ট গিফেন্স কলেজের পাদরী অস্বাভাবিক পরিচয় হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথকে দেখে, তাঁর সঙ্গে কথাবার্তা বলে, পত্র বিনিময় করে এড্‌লি বুঝলেন যে উনিষায়ে তাঁর জীবন বাঁধা পড়লো এই মহামানবের কাছেই সঙ্গে।

এড্‌লি তাঁর প্রায়জীবনী "What I owe to Christ" গ্রন্থে লিখছেন "১৯১২ সালের একটি চমৎকার গ্রীষ্ম যখন। আমদেউ হাঁথের কাছে রদেনফোর্টের তাঁর গৃহে আমাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করেছেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন লণ্ডনে।.....যেদিন কবিকে আমি প্রথম দেখলাম, তাঁর কাব্যভাষা পান কন্‌লান, ভারতের অন্তর প্রান্তরে যে মহান বিশ্বাস-শক্তি নিহিত, সেই শক্তির সূক্ষ্ম নির্ভুল মানুষের পরিচয় আমি আমার স্তব্ধ অন্তরের মধ্যে অনুভব করলাম—প্রীতিপূর্ণ কাব্যমাপুর্নীর সৃষ্টি সেই আমার প্রথম পরিচয়।

সেইদিন রাতে শয্যা গ্রহণের আগে একটি বিষয়ে আমি স্থির নিশ্চয় করলাম। কবি যদি অনুমতি দেন, তাহলে তাঁর শান্তিনিকেতন আগ্রামে স্থান নেবে। দিল্লীর বিদেশী মিথনে বসে এই ভাবনাকে কিছুতেই আমি চিন্তিতে পারবনা। শান্তি-

নিকেতনের পটভূমিকায় এই বিচিত্র মহাদেশ নিবিড়ভাবে আমার কাছে বরা দেবে।.....একটা কথা শুনে আমার আনন্দের শেষ রইলনা যে উইলিয়াম পিয়ার্সনও এই একই বাসনা কবির কাছে নিবেদন করেছেন এবং কবি তাতে সানন্দে সম্মতি দিয়েছেন। কিন্তু আমার পক্ষে অবিলম্বে এমনি পরিকল্পনা নিয়ে অগ্রসর হওয়ার উপায় ছিল না। তখনো আমি মিশনের কর্তৃবা থেকে মুক্ত হইনি। কিন্তু মনে আশা রইল। দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার সঙ্কটময় দিনগুলির পেরনা এই আশার আনন্দে লাবন হলো।" "রাখাগুলি" অনুবাদ নির্মলচন্দ্র গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়। পৃঃ ১৩৮—১৩৯)

এড্‌লি দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় যাবেন বলে দিল্লী থেকে এলেন : উইলিয়াম পিয়ার্সন দিল্লীতে রথুর্বার সিংহের প্রচলিতক ছিলেন—তিনিও এলেন শান্তিনিকেতনে।

কলিকাতা নাগরিকদের পক্ষ থেকে শান্তিনিকেতনে রবীন্দ্র সন্মিলন হবার (২৩ নভেম্বর ১৯১৩) পর কবি কলিকাতায় যান : কিন্তু ফিরে আসলেন—এড্‌লি দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় যাবেন গান্ধীজীর সত্যগ্রহণ আন্দোলন দেখবার জন্য। শান্তিনিকেতন মন্দিরে উপাসনা করলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই দুই বিদেশী ভারত দরদীর কল্যাণের জন্য। "ভাব্রদের সভায় পিয়ার্সন বাংলায় বললেন "আমি এবং আমার বন্ধুর (এড্‌লির) পক্ষ হইতে একটি মাত্র কথা তোমাদিগকে বলিতেছি যে এই শান্তিনিকেতন আগ্রাম ছইতে যে শান্তি আমরা সঙ্গে করিয়া লইয়া যাউতেছি, তাহা দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার দ্বায়ে তোমাদিগকে সাহায্য করিবে।" নির্ধারিত প্রবাসী ভারতীয়দের মধ্যে দুইটি ইংরেজের হৃদয় ব্যথিত হয়ে উঠলো। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এড্‌লিকে লিখলেন,—

"You know, our best love was with you, while you were fighting our cause in Africa". এই হলো গান্ধীজীর কর্মে রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম সংযোগ—যদিও তা অপর্যাপক।

দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকা ১৯১০ সালে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে : ব্রিটিশ বুয়র সকলেই জোঁট পাকিয়েছিল—ভারতীয়দিগকে দেশ থেকে দূর করার জন্য ; প্রায় ৭০৮০ বৎসর ধরে ভারতীয়রা পুরুষানুকূলে বাস করে দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার যথেষ্ট উন্নতি করেছে ; এখন দেশটা বাসের যোগ্য হয়েছে, ভারতীয়রা এখন ফাল্‌তু। তাই নানা রকমের আইন করে, তাদের অপমান করে, উত্তাড় করে, দেশ থেকে তাড়াবার যড়যন্ত্র করেছে। গান্ধীজীর প্রতিবাদ সত্যগ্রহণ রূপ নিয়েছিল।

যাই হোক জেনারেল স্মার্টস নূতন প্রবর্তনকার অন্যতম মন্ত্রী হয়ে গান্ধীজীর সঙ্গে একটি মিটিং করলেন, সত্যগ্রহণ আন্দোলন বন্ধ হলো।

দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকা ও ভারত দুই দেশই ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যের অন্তর্গত : তাই তিনি ইংলণ্ডে চললেন কলোনিয়াল সেক্রেটারী বা উপনিবেশ সচিবের সঙ্গে মোলাকাৎ করে একটা বোঝাপড়া করবেন ও তারপর

জরতে ফিরবেন। কিন্তু মুশকিল হলো তাঁর ফিনিঙ্ক বিদ্যালয় নিয়ে—সোটাও তাঁর আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়। ব্যবস্থা করলেন এণ্ড্রুজ্জ। তিনি ১৯১৪ সালে শান্তিনিকেতনের কাছে যোগ দিয়েছেন। তাঁর ব্যবস্থায় ফিনিঙ্ক বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র ও শিক্ষকগণ শান্তিনিকেতনে আশ্রয় পেলো।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ গান্ধীজীকে লিখলেন,

“That you could think of my school as the right and the likely place where your Phoenix boys could take shelter when they are in India, has given me real pleasure and that pleasure has greatly enhanced when I saw those dear boys in that place. I write this letter to thank you for allowing your boys to become our boys as well and thus form a living link in the *Sadhana* of both of our lives.”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান্ধীজীকে এই প্রথম পত্র (১৯১৫)। আর শেষ পত্র লেখেন ১৯৪০ সালে ফেব্রুয়ারী মাসে। এই ২৫ বৎসর উভয়ের মধ্যে যোগসত্ত্ব রক্ষা করে চলেছিলেন এণ্ড্রুজ্জ।

১৯৪০ সালের এপ্রিল মাসে এণ্ড্রুজ্জের মৃত্যু হলো। গান্ধীজী কলকাতায় এণ্ড্রুজ্জকে নাসিং হোমে শেষ দেখা দেখে গেলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথেরও সঙ্গে সেই শেষ সাক্ষাৎ করে গেলেন।

এণ্ড্রুজ্জ তাঁর আত্মজীবনীতে লিখছেন, “মহারাজা গান্ধীজীর সঙ্গে আমার প্রথম পরিচয় হয় দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় (১৯১৩)..... গান্ধীজীর সংস্পর্শে এসে আমি ভয়কে ভয় করতে শিখেছি। দক্ষিণ অফ্রিকার সংস্পর্শে এসে আমি ভয়কে ভয় করতে শিখেছি। যা কিছু নিষ্পত্তি ও ভাবের তাঁর চরিত্রসংস্পর্শে তেমনি জাতিত্ব হয়েছে, উজ্জীবিত হয়েছে আমার প্রেরণা”।

ফিনিঙ্ক বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্ররা এসেছে শান্তিনিকেতনে। তাদের সঙ্গে আছেন মণনলাল, রাজ্জম, কোশিল প্রভৃতি। দত্তাত্রেয় বা কাঁকা কালেক্টর এসে তাদের সঙ্গে যোগ দিলেন। এই ছাত্র-শিক্ষকরা আশ্রমের সামনে একটা নতুন আদর্শ বরলো।

গান্ধীজী ইংলণ্ড থেকে ভারতে এসে জন্মে পাবলেন যে তাঁর বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্ররা, তাঁর পুত্র দেবদাস প্রভৃতি সকলেই শান্তিনিকেতনে আছে। গান্ধীজী কলকাতাবন্দিকে সঙ্গে করে বোলপুর এলেন (ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯১৫)। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন আশ্রমে ছিলেন না, তখাচ গান্ধীজী বলেছেন—“The teachers and students overwhelmed me with affection, the reception was a beautiful combination of simplicity, art and love!”

সত্যিই গান্ধীজী আশ্রমের বলে আশ্রমবাসীরা দিনরাত্রে খেটে নতুন রাজ্য নির্মাণ করেছিল।

কিন্তু এ যাত্রায় গান্ধীজীর পক্ষে আশ্রমে দীর্ঘকাল থাকা সম্ভব হলোনা। টেলিগ্রাম পেলেন ১৯ ফেব্রুয়ারী পুনায় গোখলের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। গান্ধীজী গোখলেকে গুরুর ন্যায় শ্রদ্ধা করতেন। তিন বৎসর পূর্বে গোখলে ভারতীয়দের পক্ষ থেকে দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকায় সত্যগ্রহ ও ভারতীয়দের নিগ্রহ দেখতে গিয়েছিলেন। গান্ধীজী বিলাত হইতে ফিরবার পথে বোম্বাইতে নেমে পুনায় গিয়েছিলেন পীড়িত গোখলেকে দেখবার জন্য। এখন, তাঁর মৃত্যুর সংবাদ টেলিগ্রামে পেয়ে খুবই ব্যথিত চিত্তে গান্ধীজী আশ্রম থেকে পূনা গেলেন।

৬ই মার্চ গান্ধীজী শান্তিনিকেতনে এলেন; তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ

আছেন শান্তিনিকেতন কুঠিবাড়িতে, কলকাতা নানিক লিখছেন, মনস্ত্র মনসি গানের স্তরে উঠে আছে।

গান্ধীজী আশ্রম পরিদর্শন করে খুশী হতে পারলেন না। তিনি কঠোর জীবন যাপনে অভ্যস্ত, তাঁর ফিনিঙ্ক বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র-শিক্ষকরাও সেই কঠোরতায় অভ্যস্ত। তিনি তাঁর আশ্রম-জীবনীতে লিখছেন—

“আমার স্বভাব অনুযায়ী আমি বিদ্যার্থী ও শিক্ষকদ্বয়ের সহিত মিলিয়া গিয়াছিলাম। আমি তাঁহাদের সহিত গাঢ়নির্ভরতা সম্বন্ধে আলোচনা করিতে আরম্ভ করিলাম। বেতনভোগী পাঠকের পরিবর্তে যদি বিদ্যার্থী ও শিক্ষকরা নিজেই রাত্তি করেন তবে ভাল হয়। উহাতে পাকশালার সাহা ও অন্যান্য বিষয় শিক্ষকদের হাতে আসে, বিদ্যার্থীরা স্বাবলম্বী হয় এবং নিজে হাতে পাক করিবার ব্যবহারিক শিক্ষাও লাভ করে। এই সকল কথা আমি শিক্ষকদ্বয়কে জানাইলাম। দুই একজন শিক্ষক মাথা নাড়িলেন। কাছার ও কাছারও এই পরীক্ষা ভাল মনে হইল। এই বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে জানাইলে তিনি বলিলেন শিক্ষকেরা যদি অনুকূল হন, তবে এ পরীক্ষা তাঁহার নিজেই খুব ভাল লাগিবে। তিনি বিদ্যার্থীদ্বয়কে বলিলেন, “ইহাতেই প্রত্যক্ষের চারি রহিয়াছে।”

তখন আশ্রমের পাকশালার নাকশ ও নাকশের পর পাঞ্জি পৃথক ভোজন করতো। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ হলে এ বিষয়ে কথা গুলে; গান্ধীজী এই পঞ্জিভোজের বিরোধী। বলা বাহুল্য রবীন্দ্রনাথও জাতিভেদ বিশ্বাস করতেন না। কিন্তু বললেন যে তিনি কোনোদিন ছাত্র ও শিক্ষকদের বর্মমত বিষয়ে জল্পন করেন নি; কাঁবর মতে জোর করলে আপাতদৃষ্টিতে তারা নিয়ম পালন করবে, কিন্তু তা দ্বারা ফলপদ হবেনা। গান্ধীজীর মতে এটা নিষ্ফল্যতার লক্ষণ; তাই কিছুকাল পরে সাবরমতীতে তিনি আশ্রম প্রতিষ্ঠা করে ‘জাতপাত’ মেনে চলেননি; তাঁর জন্য তিনি তাঁর নিকটের অনেক লোককে দুঃখ দিয়েছিলেন। গান্ধীজী দুঃখ পেতে বা দুঃখ দিতে দ্বিধা করতেন না। তাঁর সাধ্যামে কত মহত্ব নরনারী দুঃখকে বরণ করে নিয়েছিল। তিনি নিজেই দেহকে দুঃখ দিয়েছেন অনশনের দ্বারা। রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বরা দুঃখ পেতেন, কিন্তু তাঁর জন্য অন্যকে দুঃখ দিতে পারতেন না। কর্মী ও কবি মতো এইখানে মস্ত একটা ভেদ।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের অনুমোদন পেয়ে ছাত্র-শিক্ষকরা আশ্রমের ব্যবহারী কাজে লেগে গেলেন (১০ মার্চ, ১৯১৫)। এই উৎসাহ মাস দেড়েক ছিল। গ্রীষ্মের ঢুটির সঙ্গে এর অবসান হয়। এখনো প্রতিবৎসর এইদিন গান্ধী দিবস বলে আশ্রমে উদ্‌যাপিত হয়। ভাত, পাচক, মেথর, মালি সবাই ঢুটি পায়ে—আশ্রমবাসীরা সব কাজ করেন। আশ্রমে স্বাবলম্বননীতি প্রবর্তনের পরদিন (১১ মার্চ, ১৯১৫) গান্ধীজী রেজুন চলে গেলেন; তারপর দিন কুড়ি পরে ফিরে তাঁর ছাত্রদের নিয়ে শান্তিনিকেতন ত্যাগ করে গেলেন। ফিনিঙ্ক বিদ্যার্থীদের সঙ্গে আশ্রমের যোগ ছিল মাস চার। তাদের সেখানে থাকা ব্যর্থ হয়নি—অনেক বিষয়ের প্রতি আশ্রমবাসীদের দৃষ্টি গেল।

দুই বৎসর পরে (১৯১৭) কলকাতায় ‘বিচিত্রা’ হলে ডাকঘর অভিনয়ে গান্ধীজী অন্যান্য নেতাদের সঙ্গে উপস্থিত ছিলেন; কবি মতো বিশেষ আলোচনার অবসর ও প্রয়োজন তখন হয়নি।

১৯২০-২১ সালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যুরোপের সফরে আসেন—
গান্ধীজী প্রবর্তিত অসহযোগ আন্দোলন এলো রোল্ট বিলের
পত্নীসঙ্গে ও খিলাফত আন্দোলনের সমর্থনে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ জাতীয় আন্দোলনের সঙ্গে সাম্প্রদায়িক খিলাফত
আন্দোলনকে জুড়ে দেবার বিরোধী ছিলেন ; এতু ছাড়া। রবীন্দ্রনাথ
যে পত্রাবলী সে সময়ে লেখেন, তা মডার্ন বিডিউ মাসিকে প্রকাশিত
হয়—তা এক হিসাবে গান্ধীজীর অসহযোগনীতির অসমর্থন।

কবি যখন পশ্চিমে সফরে আসেন। সেই সময় গান্ধীজী
বাংলা দেশে আসেন। শান্তিনিকেতনে বিশ্রামের জন্য তিনি
যা যেন। এতু ছাড়া ব্যবস্থার এসব হলো। খিলাফত আন্দো-
লনের অন্যতম নেত্রী যৌকত আলি এলেন গান্ধীজীর সঙ্গে দেখা
করতে। প্রসঙ্গত বলে রাখি বঙ্গ বঙ্গের পরে সত্যায় চন্দ্র বস্তুর
সঙ্গে যখন গান্ধীজীর বিরোধ বেধেছে, তখন এই শান্তিনিকেতনে
কবির কাছে আসেন সত্যায় ও জহরলাল। কবি দেশে ফেরবার
পর (ডিসেম্বর ১৯২১) কলিকাতার জোড়াসাঁকোর বাড়িতে
গান্ধীজী আসেন কবির সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করতে ; সেখানে এতু ছাড়া
আর কেউ উপস্থিত ছিলেন না। তাঁদের মধ্যে যে কথোপকথন
হয়, তার বিবরণ পাওয়া যায় না। তবে তাঁদের মতের মধ্যে
মিলনের বাধা ছিল। গান্ধীজী দেশের আত্ম মুক্তির জন্য বাধ্য,
রবীন্দ্রনাথ মানুষের মুক্তির জন্য ব্যাকুল। একজন ভাবছেন
স্বাধীনতা পেলেই সব পাওয়া যাবে, অপসংগত মনে করছেন,
মানুষের মন জাপলে সত্যকার স্বাধীনতা মিলবে—রাষ্ট্রনীতি,
অর্থনীতি, সমাজনীতি ক্ষেত্রে। এতু ছাড়া এই দুই মহাপুরুষ
সঙ্গে যে বিশেষণ করেছিলেন, তা 'Mahatma Gandhi's
Ideas' গ্রন্থের পটিকদের নিকট সুপরিচিত জানে উদ্ধৃত হলো।

অসহযোগ আন্দোলন নিরপদব অফিস থাকলো না ; অনেক
হৃদয়বিদারক ঘটনা ঘটে গেল। অবশেষে গান্ধীজীকে এসবের
জন্য দাখীল দিক করে কারাগারে পাঠিয়ে দিলেন।

এই সময়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পশ্চিম ভারত সফরে বের হয়েছেন
বিশ্বভারতীর জন্য। আমদান্যাদে এসেছেন। সেখানে থেকে
সাবনমতী আশ্রমে গেলেন। দুই বঙ্গের পূর্বে (১৯২০ সালে)
গান্ধীজী যখন তাঁর আশ্রমে ছিলেন, তখন কবি সেখানে গিয়া
একবার বাস করে আসেন। সেবার গান্ধীজীর আমন্ত্রণে গুজরাট
যাতি তা যোগেছেন সভাপতিত্ব করতে আসেন।

১৯২৫ সাল। কংগ্রেস স্বরাজ্যদলের হাতে পড়েছে।
গান্ধীজী চরকা-খন্দর আন্দোলন করছেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ দক্ষিণ
আমেরিকা সফর থেকে ফিরেছেন। গান্ধীজী কলকাতায়
এসেছেন, ভাবলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথকে চরকা-খন্দর আন্দোলনের মধ্যে
লিপ্ত করে পাবেন। তাই এলেন শান্তিনিকেতনে (২৯ মে, ১৯২৫)।
দুই দিন আলোচনা হলো। বলা বাহুল্য কেউ কাউকে নিজের
মতে আনতে পারলেন না। গান্ধীজীর সঙ্গে এসেছিলেন
মহাদেব দেশাই, পিরারীলাল, সন্ন্যাসী সতীশচন্দ্র দাশগুপ্ত
প্রভৃতি।

১৯৩০ সালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর শেষ পাশ্চাত্য সফর করে
ফিরে আসেন। লগুন তখন গোল টেবিল বৈঠক প্রথম দফায়
বসেছে ; গান্ধীজী তাতে যোগদান করেন নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন
লিখেছিলেন যে গান্ধীজী লগুন উপস্থিত হলে ভালো করতেন—
কোনো আশা না করে যাওয়াই উচিত ছিল।

তারপর দ্বিতীয় বৈঠকে গান্ধীজী গেলেন শেষ পর্যন্ত একা

ভারতের প্রতিনিধি হয়ে। সেই সময়ে গান্ধীজীর জন্মদিন প্রথমে
উদ্‌যাপিত হলো (২রা অক্টোবর ১৯৩১)। কবি বলেন “কেবল-
মাত্র রাষ্ট্রনৈতিক প্রয়োজন সিদ্ধির মূল্য আরোপ করে তাঁকে আমরা
উপলব্ধি করি। প্রচণ্ড এই শক্তি, সমস্ত দেশের বুক জোড়া
জড়ের জগদ্বন্দ্ব পাখনকে আজ নাড়িয়ে দিয়েছে।.....দেশ ভরে
আছয়, সংকোচে অভিভূত ছিল।আমাদের আত্মকৃত পরাভব
থেকে মুক্তি দিলেন মহাগান্ধী। এখন শাসনকর্তার উদাত হয়েছেন
আমাদের সঙ্গে রফা নিষ্পত্তি করতে। কেননা তাদের পরশায়ন
তাদের পতীরতর ভিত্তি টুচ্ছে, যে ভিত্তি আমাদের বীরহীনতায়।
আমরা অন্যায়সে আজ জগৎসমাজে আমাদের স্থান দাবি করছি।”

দ্বিতীয় গোল টেবিল বৈঠক থেকে ফেরবার আটদিনের মধ্যে
লর্ড উইলিংডন গান্ধীজীকে কারাগারে পাঠিয়ে দিলেন ; তখন
রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে ভাষণ দেন, সেটি এখনো স্মরণীয়।

তারপর এলো ম্যাকডোনাল্ডের নয়া সংবিধানের খসড়া।
ইতিপূর্বে মুসলমানদের তে পৃথক্ মত। যাব্যস্ত হয়ে আছে, এবার
হিন্দু সমাজের মধ্যে অত্যাচারের ও বর্ণহিন্দুদের পৃথক্ করে দেবার
চেষ্টা হয়েছে। গান্ধীজী পুনা যেরবেদা জেলে আটক। তিনি
ধোষণা করলেন যদি এই আইন পাশ হয় তবে তিনি অনশনে
প্রাণত্যাগ করবেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ শান্তিনিকেতনে। তিনি বিচা-
লিত হয়ে উঠলেন ; পত্র, টেলিগ্রাম পাঠিয়ে নিশ্চিন্ত থাকতে
পারলেন না ; দেশের কংগ্রেসী সমস্ত নেত্রী তখন কারাগারে।
রবীন্দ্রনাথ পুনায় চলে গেলেন। পুনা পাক্সি হলো। গান্ধীজী
অনশন ত্যাগ করলেন—রবীন্দ্রনাথ গান করলেন :—

“জীবন যখন শুধায় যায়, করুণাধারী এসো।”

পুনা পাক্সি হওয়ার বাগ্মলিরা গান্ধীজীর উপর খুব বিরক্ত
হয়। তিনি যখন কলকাতায় আসেন, তখন তারা তাঁকে বর্জন
করবে বলে শাসায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেশবাসীকে শান্ত হবার জন্য
অনুরোধ জ্ঞাপন করে বললেন “আমি তাঁকে অভিনন্দন করছি।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশ্বভারতীর চিত্রদারিদ্র্য মোচন করে ছাত্র-
চাত্রীদের নিয়ে ১৯৩৬ সালের গোড়ার দিকে উত্তর ভারতে
সফরে বের হয়েছেন। শরীর জীর্ণ—তবুও বের হতে হচ্ছে
অর্থের জন্য। বিশ্বভারতীর দায় তাঁর একারই। বহু নগর
দুরে দিল্লীতে উপস্থিত হলেন। গান্ধীজী তখন সেখানে। সেদিন
সন্ধ্যায় গান্ধীজী ও কস্তুরাবাই কবির সঙ্গে দেখা করতে এলেন।
বললেন, কবির যা বয়স ও স্বাস্থ্য, তাতে তাঁর পক্ষে এভাবে ঘুরে
বেড়ানো উচিত নয়। তাঁরা শুন্লেন বিশ্বভারতীর যাইতির
কথা। তারপর দিন বিড়লাদের কাছ থেকে যটি হাজির ঠিকার
একখানি চেক নিয়ে কবির হাতে এনে দিলেন।

কবির শরীর ক্ষত অবনতির দিকে যাচ্ছে ; তাই গান্ধীজী ও
কস্তুরাবাই কবিকে দেখতে এলেন শান্তিনিকেতনে (১৯৪০
১৮ই ফেব্রুয়ারী)। গান্ধীজীর সহিত কবির কয়েক বার দেখা
হলো কিন্তু তাঁদের আলোচনা “Too sacred and personal in
character for recapitulation.”

গান্ধীজী ফিরে গিয়ে বলেন “The visit to Santiniketan
was pilgrimage to me.”

কিছুকাল পূর্বে এক জাপানী বাংলা দেশে আসেন ; গান্ধীজী-
সঙ্গে দেখা করতে গেল, তিনি তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেন “বি-
দেখেছ বাংলা দেশের ?” তিনি বলেন যে হামিলটন সাহেবকে
গোয়াল দেবেছেন। গান্ধীজী তাঁকে বলেন “Gosala is
Gosala. But Santiniketan is India.”



LACORE IN 1939

বর্ষাশ্রম - ১৯৩৮

গান্ধীজী শান্তিনিকেতন ছাড়ার পূর্বে কবি তাঁর হাতে একখানি পত্র দিয়েছিলেন। সেই পত্রে কবি লেখেন যে তাঁর অন্তর্ভূত ভাবে বিশ্বভারতীর ভার তিনি গান্ধীজীর হাতে দিয়ে যাচ্ছেন। কবি বুঝতে পেরেছিলেন ভারতে বৃশ্চিক শক্তির অবসান হবেই এবং একদিন কংগ্রেস ভারতের শাসনভার গ্রহণ করবে। তাই গান্ধীজীকে বিশ্বভারতী সম্বন্ধে তাঁর শেষ অনুরোধ জানিয়ে দেন। কবির মৃত্যুর (১৯৪১, ৭ই আগস্ট) ছয় বৎসর পরে ভারত

স্বাধীন হলো। তারপর ভারত সংবিধান তৈরী হয়ে যখন পূরো-পূরিভাবে সর্ববিধ কাজ কর্ম করবার আইন প্রণয়নের অধিকার লাভ হলো; রাজেন্দ্র প্রসাদ প্রথম রাষ্ট্রপতি হলেন, তাঁর অল্পকালের মধ্যে শান্তিনিকেতন বিশ্বভারতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের মর্যাদা লাভ করলো (১৯৫১)।

ভারত সরকার যখন এ ভার নিলেন, তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও গান্ধীজী কেহই আর ইচ্ছামে নেই।

যেখায় থাকে সবার অবসর দিনের ছোট দিন—
সেইখানে যে চরণ ত্রোনার রাজে—
সবার পিছে, সবার নীচে, সব-হারাদের মাঝে।
যখন তোমায় প্রণাম করি আমি
প্রণাম আমার কোনখানে যায় থাকি—
ত্রোনার চরণ যেখায় নামে অপমানের তলে—
সেখায় আমার প্রণাম নামে না যে—
সবার পিছে, সবার নীচে, সব-হারাদের মাঝে ॥

অহংকার তো পায় না নাগান যেখায় তুমি কল
রিজুভষণ দীনদরিত্র রাজে
সবার পিছে, সবার নীচে, সব-হারাদের মাঝে।
ধনে মানে যেখায় আছে ভরি
সেখায় ত্রোনার সঙ্গ আশা করি—
সঙ্গী হয়ে আছি যেখায় সঙ্গীহীনের ঘরে
সেখায় আমার হৃদয় নামে না যে
সবার পিছে, সবার নীচে, সব-হারাদের মাঝে ॥

১৯ আষাঢ় ১৩১৭

বিশ্বনাথচন্দ্র



বাঙালী রবীন্দ্রনাথ

সৈয়দ মুজতবা আলী

পৃথিবীর সভ্য জগতের সর্বত্রই রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্ম-শতাব্দীমণ্ডলী উদ্‌যাপিত হচ্ছে। ভারতবর্ষের বাইরে তাঁকে সমরন করা হবে প্রধানতঃ বিশ্ব-নাগরিকরূপে, বাঙালার বাইরে ভারতবর্ষের সর্বত্র তাঁকে সমরন করা হবে প্রধানতঃ ভারতীয় কবিরূপে এবং আমরা বাঙালী তাঁকে সমরন করবো প্রধানতঃ বাঙালী কবিরূপে।

এ কিছু বিচিত্র নয়। জর্মানির সাধারণ জনের পক্ষে জানা কঠিন যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কালিদাস গৌতমের লোক কিংবা ব্রাহ্মণ অত্যাচারের প্রতিবাদ স্বরূপ তিনি সরকারী খেতাব বর্জন করেন— অর্থাৎ তাঁর খ্যাতি ভারতীয় রূপে তাঁর চোখে পড়বে না। যে প্রধানতঃ সমরন করবে যেদিনের কথা যেদিন, প্রথম বিশ্বযুদ্ধের পর, যে জাতি-সমাজে অপমানিত এবং যেদিন ‘মিগোর’ তাঁকে গুলিয়ে-ছিলেন ‘পরাজিতের গান’—‘দি যা অন্ দি ডিফীনেড।’ তবু সেই বকমই চীন সমরন করবে, জাপান যেদিন তাঁকে পদানত করবার চেষ্টায় রাজ্য নোবুপ ইয়োরোপীয় পদ্ধতিতে অস্ত্র সংগ্রহ করতে অসম্মত করে যেদিন রবীন্দ্রনাথ চীনের হয়ে জাপানকে তাঁর স্বধর্ম, তাঁর মত, বর্ম সমরন করিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন।

স্পেন কিংবা নরওয়ে তবু এ-ভাবে দেখবে না। তবে তারাও দেখবে তাঁর বিশ্ব-নাগরিক রূপ, তাঁর বিশ্বকবি রূপ।

‘হে ভারত, নৃপতির শিখায়ে তুমি
তাহিতে মুকুট দণ্ড সিংহাসন তুমি।’

* * *

কমীরে শিখালে তুমি যোগসুহৃৎ চিত্তে
সর্বকল্যপূহা পুঙ্খ দিতে উপচার।

* * *

ভোগেতে বেবেড় তুমি সংবরের সাগে,
নির্মল লৈরাগে দৈন্য করেছ উজ্জল।’

মিকা টিগ্লির সাধারণ্য যদি বা করায় কিংবা তবু এ কবি-প্রাণির মূল অর্থ পরতে পারে যে হলে কবি-প্রাণির তখনই বা জ্ঞানের দিক, এবং যেই যদি তাঁর কাম্য হয় তবে এ কবিতা না পড়ে ভারতবর্ষের যে কোনো সামান্যিক ইতিহাস পড়েনই তাঁর জ্ঞান সম্বন্ধ হবে অধিকতর। এ কিছু নূতন নয়। আমরাও পিলগিনস্ প্রোগ্রেসের অনেকাংশ এই ভাবেই পড়ে থাকি। পক্ষান্তরে যে কোনো শিক্ষিত ভারতীয়, যার জন্ম মন ভারত-

বর্ষের ইতিহাসগত আদর্শ সম্বন্ধে যতটুকু, তাঁর কাছে কবিতাকে অনুভূত হবে বস স্বরূপে। আরেকটি সরলতর উদাহরণ দি

মুখে তার লোহুরেণু, লীলাপদা হাতে,
কণ্ঠমূলে কুন্দকলি, কুরুবক মাখে,
তনু দেখে রাজাধর নারীবক্সে রাখা
চরণে নৃপুরুষানি বাজে আশা-আশা।*

এ কবি-প্রাণি পড়ে বিদেশীর জ্ঞান সম্বন্ধে হবে, ভারতীয় রমণীর প্রয়াস সম্বন্ধে, কিছুটা বুঝ যে পারে না যে কথা বলি না, কিন্তু যে বসিক কালিদাসের নীতিকাদের সঙ্গে উপরিচিত তাঁর হৃদয় অনুভূত হবে এক অভূতপূর্ব আনন্দ—প্রাচীন দিনের আশা-আশা শব্দের সঙ্গে মিলে গিয়েছে আজকের দিনের চেনা-শব্দ, ঠাকুরের তাঁর মিলুক খুললে প্রাচীন দিনের কপূ বসন্তবীর শব্দ যখন বাতাসে ভেসে বেড়াচ্ছে তখন যদি আজকের দিনের উরা আশা-আশা মন মানতীর জ্বলস তাঁর সঙ্গে মিশে যায়। ইংলণ্ডের ঠাকুরের মিলুক খুললে তাঁর থেকে বেগের প্রাচীন দিনের ক্যাডেড শব্দ শব্দেও মিশে যায় আজকের দিনের ডাকোডিলের শব্দ। কবি কিয় বস পাইলেন।

অথচ রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেখানে ভারতীয়ের কবি যেখানে কবি বিশ্বকবি। তাঁর ‘ভাষ্যের’ অমল মানবাত্মার প্রতীক, কবিতা চিহ্ন ভগবদ্ব্যপেক্ষের অনুপ্রেরণা। সকলেই জানেন পারস্য বাগিন ভিয়েনায় যে নাসিক বী পরিমাণ সরকার প্রিয়। ‘বিশ্বকবি’ কি যে পরিমাণ বসন্তই ওমর জায়গায় করতে পারবে?

এবারে অবাঙালী অথচ ভারতীয়দের কথা মিন।

‘আমরা বেবেড়ি কাশের গুচ্ছ, আমরা বেবেড়ি শৈফালিকা—
প্রতি শরতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই কাশের পাতাফা করেছেন।’ (কবিতা মিউনিকশনে সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে হঠাৎ তাঁর মনে পড়ল দেশের কথা—

‘তুমি বীর্ষি বাছল যে এই নীল গগনে
আমি কেন একলা বসে এই বিজনে।’

এবং দেশের সমরনে গানটি শেষ করলেন,

‘আকাশ হায়ে গুহ কাশের আলোচনে—
জ্বর পুছে তব শূন্যে তাকাই আপন-মনে।’

* হস্ত লীলাকমলমণ্ডকে বাণ-কুন্দানিবিদ্ধা
নীতা লোহু-প্রসব-বদ্যা পাণ্ডুতাম্রানে গ্রীবা
চূড়াপাশে নবকুরুবক চাককণেশ-শিরাশ
গামস্তে চ তদুপগমজং যব নীপং বধুনাম্ ॥

এই কাশ নিতাইই বাঙালী কবির আদরের বস। আমার মনে আছে, ডেনবেলিয়া যখন আমি শাপিনিকে তখন পড়তুম তখন এক কুশাচি ভদ্রলোক আশ্রম দর্শনে এসে আমাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেন, কবি কি বস? যোভাধ্যাক্ষে তিনি শরৎকালেই এসেছিলেন। কয়েক দিনে তিনি পরম বড়ে যোভাচি কাশ বসতে লাগলেন। কবি আশ্রম হয়ে শুধালে পর তিনি বলেন যে তিনি পূর্ব আফ্রিকা নামে আশ্রম থেকে এখানে এসেছেন, চিন্তা অক্ষরে ছাপা 'কিছু'তে কাশের উল্লেখ দেখে তার কৌতূহল হয়েছিল, কবি শুধরতে যাবার সময় সঙ্গে নিয়ে যাবেন।

আমরা যে একম ইংলেণ্ডে গিয়ে প্রিমরোজ চৌকির সন্ধান করি। এখানে আরেকটি উদাহরণ নিম্ন:

“ঠাকুরমা ক্ষততানে ছড়া যেত পড়ে,
প্রাণনা নাহি আছে—বউ আসে চতুর্দোলা চড়ে
আম-কঠিনের চায়ে,
গলায় মোতির মালা, যোনার চরণচক্র পায়ে।”

মোতির মালা আর যোনার চরণচক্র পায়ে পরে নবনয় অন্য়ান্য প্রদেশে যার, যদিও যিক চতুর্দোলা চড়ে যার কিনা জানিনে, কিন্তু ‘আম-কঠিনের চায়ে’ যে অতীত বলায় বাড়ির চেমা চিন্তা সমন্বয় করিয়ে দিল, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে যে শ্রম সিক্ততার ছবি চোখের সামনে কুটি উঠলো—তার সঙ্গে কনসিগনি বর্গের চতুর্দোলায় চিত্রিত অধঃখলঙ্গার ভূমিতা প্রতিনিয় বস।

আম-কঠিনের চায়ে দীন গ্রাম অধঃস্থ—এমন সময় আমি এম করে,

“সেখার তুমি ওখী জাণী সেখার তুমি মানী,
সেখার তুমি তববিনের সেবা।”

এই যে ভেজা যল্লয়ের কাছল মাগার মজল আখি—আমাদের বলায় গ্রাম, যোনি দয়াক্রমে জানি না থাকেন কি চতুর্দোলা জাণীকীর (ওরকম বস বাঙালির বাইরেও অলম্য নয়) সম্পূর্ণ বস অমদ প্রদেশ দেখতে পারে?

সবারে শেষ দ্বীপ দিলা গদা মদাকে তার ওরবের সব দেশেই পবিত্র পুণ্যভোগ্য বলে মানেন। বাঙালী গ্রামে না গদা বলে, ইহা গ্রামেই বিহারেও গ্রামমন্দির বলা হয়। কিন্তু বাঙালী কাছল গ্রামে না গদাকে পতখানি না বলে চিত্রটি যিনা করে তো যে পদম বলা পাইনি।

“নমোনদো নাম স্বন্দী ময় স্বন্দী বস্তুনি-
গদার তার, সিক্ত সর্বা, জাবন জুড়ালে তুমি।”

এভাবে মায়ের দিকটা বাঙালী দেবেছে বেশী—পশ্চিমারা দেবেছে তার পুণ্যের দিক। আর শুধরানি মাদারো—যথাস্থ যদ্য দশ দিয়ে গদা হয়ে যাননি—তারা তো আমাদের এ দিকটা সঙ্গে সম্পূর্ণ অভ্য।

আমার একটি ঘটনা মনে পড়েছে। বাবির পৌর পেরবার সময়

এক মুসলমান গদাকে নমস্কার করতে আরেক মুসলমান বললে, ‘তুই হি দুদের এসব মানিস নাকি?’ সে বললে, ‘দূর! গদার আবার জাত কি? গদা হিন্দু নাকি?’ তারপর সে ছোট খাটো বক্তৃতা দিয়ে বোঝালে, গদাকে আরা বা আলার প্রশংসা বলে স্বীকার করা তার পক্ষে পাপ।

অর্থাৎ বাঙালী মুসলমান পুণ্যের দিকটা অগ্রাধার করে শুধু মায়ের দিকটা দেবেছে।

বিশ্বকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ, বিশ্বনাথরিক রবীন্দ্রনাথ, ভারতের কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আমরা বাঙালীরাও চিনি, কারণ বিশ্বের সঙ্গে আমাদের সম্পর্ক আছে এবং আমরা তার তাঁরও বসি। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাঙালীরা যেন আমরা না ভুলি। বিশ্বকবি রূপে, ভারতীয় কবি রূপে তিনি আমাদের সামনে যামি বৈরা প্রচার করেছেন, উপনিষদের বাণী নুতন করে শুনিয়েছেন, মানবায়ার সঙ্গে অস্ত্রা-য়ার যোগ, মানুষের সঙ্গে মানুষের যোগ, মানুষের চরম আদর্শ কি এমনই প্রচার করেছেন দার্শনিক রূপে, দ্রষ্টা রূপে এবং কিছুটা কবি রূপে। ‘কিছুটা’ ইচ্ছা করেই বলব, কারণ মাতৃভাষায় যে বস্তু রসরূপে প্রকাশ পেয়েছে অনুবাদে তার অধিকাংশই লোপ পায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাষাতেই বলি,—বলেছেই প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়ে—

“সেখার তুমি ওখী জাণী সেখার তুমি মানী,
সেখার তুমি তববিনের সেবা।”

কিন্তু বাঙালীর কাছে তিনি অন্যরূপে বস দিয়েছেন।—

“সেখার তুমি দৃষ্টকর্তা নহ,
সৃষ্টকর্তা সারি করে রহ,
সেখা নানা বর্ণের সংগ্রহ,
সেখা নানা মূর্তিতে মন নাহে,
সেখা তোমার অতৃপ্ত আশ্রয়
আপন ভোলা পদের রচনাতে।”

আরেকটি সামান্য উদাহরণ দি। শাপিনিকে তখন আশ্রমেই ছাত্রেরা যে দুটি বৈদিক মন্ত্র বখায়ে সন্ধ্যা ও সন্ধ্যার উচ্চারণ করে তার সাক্ষ্য মন্ত্র:

“যো দেবো অগ্নৌ যো অগ্নয় যো বিশ্বা ভুবন্ম আবিবেশ
য ওষবিধু, যো বনস্পতিধু, তস্মৈ দেবায় নমো নম।

যে দেব অগ্নিতে, যিনি জলে, যিনি বিশ্বভুবনে পবিত্র হয়ে যাচ্ছেন, যিনি ওষবিতে, যিনি বনস্পতিতে সেই দেবকে বারবার নমস্কার করি।”

এই শাপিত দর্শনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের আবার বিশ্বাস এবং এই বিশ্বাস নিয়েই তিনি দেহত্যাগ করেছেন। মৃত্যুর পূর্বকালে তিনি সেই দেবেরই সমরণে বলেছেন,

“তোমার স্রষ্টার পথ বেখেচু আকৌশ করি
বিচিত্র ছলনাফালে, যে ছলনাময়ী।”

এখানেও কাশ আছে কি না জানিনে তবে মানুষের পুণ্যভোগ্য কালো তার উল্লেখ দেখিনি। ভদ্রলোকের নাম নবনী ভাই পাইল। পরবর্তীকালে যিনি বিশ্বভাষাতে কিছুকাল জয়ন ভাষা ও সাহিত্য পড়ান।

যে 'উলনাভালকে' রবীন্দ্রনাথ যৌবনে মায়া-মিথ্যা কিংবা পাপবিদ্ধ আবিষ্কার দৃষ্টির বিকাশ বলে মনে করতেন, শেষ মুহূর্তে সেই 'উলনাভাল'-কে ও তিনি সেই বুকের অন্যতম বিকাশ বলে স্বীকার করে নিচ্ছেন-যে বুদ্ধ অধিকৃত, মলিলে সর্বত্র বিরাজমান।

এই দর্শনই একদা বাচস্পতি দ্বারা শীবু ও ভরম দার্শনিক শোপেনহাওয়ারকে মনের শাস্তি দিয়েছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কর্ম-জীবনে এইটাই কেন্দ্র এবং ইয়োরোপে বুকের স্বরূপ সম্বন্ধে বক্তৃতা কালে এই দর্শনেই তিনি বার বার ফিরে এসেছেন।

কিন্তু প্রশ্ন, এই বুদ্ধকে কি জদয় দিয়ে ভালোবাসা যায়, 'আমাদের পরাধে' তাঁর 'চরণে' কি প্রেমের কাসি দাঁকা যায়?

রবীন্দ্রনাথই বাবু নার 'তাই ঋমিকে সমরণ করে বলেছেন,
'যতো বাচো মিতর্ক্যে অপাপা মনসা যত।'
'মনের সমিত পাক্য থাকে না পেয়ে নিবৃত্ত হয়।'
তাই যদি হয় তবে তাঁর যত্নে প্রেমের মিলন হবে কি করে?

এখানে এসে দ্বন্দ্ব রবীন্দ্রনাথ মরমিয়া বাঙালী কবিরূপে বাঙলায় গ্রহীতলেন,

“আমার পিয়ার ডায়া আকাশে আজ ভাসে
বুদ্বিসজল বিষম নিশ্রাসে।
নারিয়ারা বনের পক্ষ নিয়ে
পরশধারা বরণমালা পাখে আমার পিয়া।
আমার পিয়া ঘন শ্রাবণ বারায়
আকাশ ডেরে মনের কক্ষ হারায়।
আমার পিয়ার আঁচল দোলে
নিবিড় বনের শায়ল ডাছাসে।”

আর তখনই যত্নে কবি

“শ্রাবণ আকাশে দিয়েছি পাতি
মম উল-উলচল আঁখি মেঘে মেঘে -
সপো উড়িছে তার কেশরাশি পূব পন দেখে।”

যে দেশ অধিকৃত উলচেত ছিলেন দার্শনিক রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভ্রামনশনে, তাঁর স্থলে পিয়া পক্ষি (প্রোজেক্ট) হয়েছেন কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ দ্বারা। কিংবা কি বলবো, বুদ্ধ ও পিয়া এক হয়ে গিয়েছেন? এবং কবির উলচলচল আঁখিও মেঘে মেঘে বিচরণ করতে করতে তাঁর যত্নে এক হয়ে গেল? তাই--

“শায়লে শায়ল তুমি, নীলিমায় নীল
আমার নিখিল
তোমাতে পেয়েছে তার অস্তরের মিল।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখনই উপনিষদের বুদ্ধবাদ বিশ্বজনকে গুনিতেছেন তখন শুনেছে একাত্ম মনে বিস্মিত চিত্তে, কিন্তু সেই দর্শনের মনুষ্যত্ব বিকাশ যা বাঙলাতে হয়েছে বাঙালী কবি দ্বারা 'তার বস কি এক আশ্রয়ন করতে পেরেছে?

অথচ একথা তো কেউ দেশে বিদেশে স্বীকার করেন না যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সর্বোত্তম পরিচয় কবিরূপে। রবীন্দ্রনাথকে নিয়ে একদিন যদি বিশ্ববাসীর প্রয়োজন মিটে যায়, কবিরূপে তাঁর প্রয়োজন বাঙালীর কাছে অক্ষুণ্ণ।

আমার বক্তব্য, ভারতবর্ষের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন প্রদেশ তথা পৃথিবীর ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি, যে যে যেমন যেমন ভাবে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে বুঝতে এই এক-বর্ষ ব্যাপী পূর্বে তারা সেই ভাবে তাঁর চিন্ময়মতি গড়েন-- তাদের চিত্তা জগতের প্রতিমা লক্ষণের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে--প্রাণ-প্রতিষ্ঠা, প্রশস্তি, বন্দনা রচনা করবে তাদের খবরদারী তীক্ষ্ণ চিত্তা-বৃত্তি দ্বারা, হয়তো বা তাঁর কবিত্বেরও উল্লেখ থাকবে যেখানে তিনি বিশ্বকবি।

এঁদের সংখ্যাই বেশী--বাঙলা দেশ ভারতবর্ষ তথা পৃথিবীর তুলনায় কতটুকু--এবং এঁদের

“কারো কবিত্ব, কারো বীরত্ব
কারো অর্থের পার্শ্ব
কেহ-বা রাজার সুজদ মহায়
কেহ বা রাজার জাতি।”

এবং আমার মনে হয় কবিত্ব যদিও প্রথম স্থান পেয়েছে, সে আসলে সর্বত্রই সর্বশেষে।

বাঙলা দেশে যেন না হয়।

বিশ্বজন যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথকে তার অকুণ্ঠ সম্মান জানাবে তখন যেন বাঙালী আমরা না ভুলি, বুদ্ধদের যখন দিগ্বিজয় করে কপিলা-বস্ততে ফিরে এসেছিলেন তখন যশোদরা তাঁকে দগ্ধিত বস্ত্রত রূপেই পেতে চেয়েছিলেন। আমরা তাঁকে বাঙালী কবি রূপেই চিনব।

দুঃখিনী মাতার পুত্র যখন রাজ সম্মান লাভ করে তখনো মায়ের কাছে যে ছেলে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বাঙলার ছেলে।

আর বিশ্বজন যদি তাঁকে বিশ্বকবি বলে রাজসমুদ্র পরিবে দেয় তখন যেন সমরণ রাখি তিনি সার্থক বাঙালী কবি হয়েছিলেন বলেই বিশ্বকবি হতে পেরেছিলেন, তিনি বিশ্বকবি হওয়ার ফলে বাঙালী কবি হননি।

তোমি ছেতেরা কী ভয়ানক অসহায়। তাদের প্রতি অবিচার করলে তারা নিরুপায় কাতরতার মধ্যে কেঁদে কেঁদে নিষ্ঠুর হৃদয়কে আরও বিরক্ত করে তোলে, ভালো করে আপনার মালিশ জানাতেও পারেনা। যেখোঁ শীতে যথাস্থ আচ্ছন্ন করে এসেছে, আব ছেলোঁচন গায়ে এক টুকরো কাপড়ও নেই--তারা উপরে কাশি, তার উপরে এই ভাকিনীর হাতের থাপ!

কলকাতা
৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি ১৯৯১

—হিমপত্রাবলী

গুরানো কথা

অবনীমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়



সে আজ প্রায় ষাট বছর হতে চলল, তখন আমার বয়স বোধহয় আট বছরও পূর্ণ হয়নি, হঠাৎ একদিন গুনলুম, আমি আর আমার চেয়ে দু' বছরের বড় এক কাকা শান্তিনিকেতনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নূতন আশ্রমে শীর্ষগিরই পড়তে ও থাকতে যাচ্ছি। জগলীতে আমাদের তখন বাড়ি-ভাতি প্রকাণ্ড পরিবার, অনেক খেলার সাথী। সকলকে, বিশেষ মাকে ছেড়ে যেতে হবে ছেনে মনটা খারাপ হয়েছিল, আমার নূতন দেশ দেখব, সেখানে মাফটারেরা পড়া না পারলে মারবেন না, যক্ষ্মাবেলার গল্প বলবেন, সবর শুনে আগ্রহ যে হয়নি তা বলতে পারি না। আমার বাবা তবলিতমোহন বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ছিলেন জগলীর সরকারী উকীল, দানবীর তর্শি-ভূষণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের বড় ছেলে। আমার মা তৎকালীন দেবী সাহিত্য-জগতে ইন্দিরা দেবী নামে প্রসিদ্ধ। আমি তাঁদের বড় ছেলে। আমার ছোট ভাই প্রভাতমোহন অনেকদিন পরে ঐ আশ্রমে পড়াশোনা করেছে ও ছবি আঁকতে শিখেছে। এখন সে সেখানে বিশ্বভারতী লোকশিক্ষা সংসদের সম্পাদক। আমার বাবার গুরুদেবের ওপর খুব শ্রদ্ধা ছিল, তিনি ছোড়সাঁকোয় থাকলে বাবা প্রায়ই তাঁর সংগে দেখা করতেন। সেই সুত্রেই তিনি ছেনে ছিলেন যে, মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের সাধনক্ষেত্র শান্তিনিকেতনে মাত্র সাত-আটটি ছাত্র নিয়ে গুরুদেব একটি আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয় খুলেছেন। গুরুদেব নিজে বাবার কাছে ছাত্র চেয়ে-ছিলেন, তাই তাঁর খুব ইচ্ছা ছিল আমাকে ও তাঁর সোজা ভাইকে সেখানে পাঠাবেন।

আমার মামার বাড়ির সংগে ঠাকুর-বাড়ির একসময়ে খুব ঘনিষ্ঠতা ছিল। মহর্ষি-দেব বখন কলকাতা ছেড়ে চেকের জন্য কিছুকাল চুচুড়ায়, গঙ্গার ধারে মাঘ দপ্তর বাড়িতে বাস করে-ছিলেন। (কলকাতায় সেই মাঘবাবুর বাজার ছিল গোল-দাঁধির সামনে, এখন সেখানে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বাড়ি উঠেছে, সেইখানে) তখন তাঁরা থাকতেন আমার প্রমাতামহ তৎকালের মুখোপাধ্যায়ের বাড়ির দিক পায়ে দক্ষিণ দিকে, মেছোবাজার পার্ব্বাণির খুব কাছে। দু' বাড়ির জানলা খুলে কথা কওয়া যেত, মাঝে একটা দরজা খুলে দু' বাড়িতে যাতায়াত করাও চলত। ভূদেববাবুর বাগানে ঠাকুর-বাড়ির ছেলেরা খেলতে আসত, দিনে-নাথ শৈশবে আমার মাসিমা অনুপ্রাণ দেবীর খেলার সাথী ছিলেন শুনেছি। গুরুদেবের দিদি স্বর্ণকুমারী দেবীর কাছে আমার মা ও মাসিমা দুজনেই লেখার সহস্রকো উৎসাহ ও সাহায্য পেয়েছিলেন। তিনি ঐখানে থাকতে তাঁর একটা লেখার প্রতিবাদ শ্রী অপ্রকাশ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের নামে এডুকেশন গেজেটে প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল। স্বর্ণকুমারী দেবী সন্দেহ করেন এবং মাকে জেরা করে জানতে পারেন সোঁা তাঁরই লেখা। আমার মা তখন নিতান্তই বালিকা, কিন্তু সেই বয়সেই তাঁর অনেক লেখা তাঁর পিতামহের কাগজে ছাপা হয়েছিল। তিনি স্বীকার করেন, তাঁর শ্রুতবাড়ি প্রাচীন-পন্থী, ছেলে-মানুষ বউএর কাগজে লেখা পছন্দ করবেন না বলে তিনি নাম গোপন করে লেখেন। স্বর্ণকুমারী দেবী মার লেখার বাঁধনি ও যুক্তির প্রার্থ্য দেখে বিস্মিত ও আনন্দিত হন, তাঁকে রাশি-নাম ইন্দিরা দেবী ব্যবহার করতে পরামর্শ দেন এবং সাহিত্য-

সৃষ্টিতে উৎসাহ দেন। সেই থেকে যতদিন তিনি বেঁচেছিলেন ততদিন মা আর মাসিমা তাঁর স্নেহ পেয়ে এসেছেন। আমি 'সেখো' হয়ে অনেকবার তাঁদের তাঁর বালিগঞ্জের বাড়িতে নিয়ে গেছি এবং নানি-ফিয়ানে আদর-যত্ন পেয়েছি।

বাবার আশ্রম দেখে মারও ইচ্ছা হত যে, তাঁর ছেলে গুরুদেবের সংস্পর্শে এসে মানুষ হয়ে উঠুক। অগত্যা সেই ব্যবস্থাই হল। আমার ঠাকুরা অবশ্য তাঁর আদরের পিতৃহীন ছেলেকে এবং বড় নাতিকে চোখের আড়াল করতে অনেক আপত্তি করে-ছিলেন, কিন্তু বড় ছেলের যুক্তি ও তর্কের ফলে শেষ পর্যন্ত তাঁকে অনুমতি দিতে হলে। কিন্তু দুজনকে একসাথে পাঠানো তাঁর মত না হওয়ায় আমাকেই প্রথমে শান্তিনিকেতনে যেতে হল।

তখনকার শান্তিনিকেতনের রূপই ছিল অস্বাভাবিক। সেখানে তখন চারিদিকে শুষ্ক বৃক্ষবৃক্ষ মাঠ, তাঁর মধ্যে মধ্যে এখানে-ওখানে দু' চারটে তিল-খেজুরের গাছ, বুনা জামের গাছ, বালি-মান্নিতে শুকনো ঘাস। দূরে কাকর-বালির উঁচু-মিচু ছমি, ছোট-বড় চিপি, কাশ গাছে সাদা সাদা ফুল ফুটে আছে। যত দূর দৃষ্টি যায় কেবল ঐ একই দৃশ্য, এত গাছপালা-বাড়ি-বাগান কিছুই ছিল না। আমার থাকবার ভাষণা হল আদি-কুটির। তাঁর পিছন দিকে আম জাম গিঁদ আমলকী এইরকম কয়েকটি বড় গাছ ছিল। সেগুলির তলায় বেশ ঠাণ্ডা, দুপুরেও খেলা করা যেত। ভাতিম-তলায় চিনেমান্নির তালি দিয়ে বাগানো মহর্ষির সাধনবেদী ছিল। বাড়ির মধ্যে ছিল বাঁধাখড় তালি দিয়ে ভাওয়া আদি-কুটির ও পাঠভবন ছাড়া কাঁচের মন্দিরটা, শান্তিনিকেতনের দোতলা বাড়িটা, আর বাগানটা। গুরুদেব দোতলা বাড়িটিতে থাকতেন, আমার বাবা বা অন্য কোনও ভায়েক অভিভাবক গেলে সেই বাড়ির নীচের তলাতে উঠতেন। পাওয়ার ব্যবস্থা অবশ্য আমাদের মধ্যে সাধারণ রাসায়নিকই হত।

শিক্ষকদের মধ্যে ছিলেন গুরুদেব স্বয়ং, বৃক্ষবৃক্ষ উপাধ্যায়, সিন্ধী শিক্ষক রেবার্টাদ আর একজন পণ্ডিত মশায়, তাঁর নাম মনে নেই। সে-সময়ে ভায়েদের মধ্যে অরুণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ছিল সব-চেয়ে ছোট, তখন তাঁর বয়স বোধহয় বছর-দুয়েক। সেও আমাদের আশ্রম এবং জগলীর ছেলে। সে এতই ছোট ছিল যে মধ্যে মধ্যে রাত্রে বিড়ানা মর্দ করে ফেলত আর রেবার্টাদকে তাঁর সব কাচা-কুচি করে দিতে হত। রাত্রে ভয় পেলে তিনি তাকে নিজেই কাছে নিয়ে শুতেন।

আশ্রমে আমাদের নিজেদের কাজ সব নিজেদের করতে হত। নিজেদের বিড়ানা পাতা ও মকালে গুটিয়ে রাখা, ঘর ঝাট দেওয়া, রাস্তা যাক করা, স্নান করে নিজেদের কাপড় কেটে শুকিয়ে নেওয়া, খেয়ে নিজেদের খালা বাঁচি খেলাস মেজে নেওয়া প্রভৃতি সমস্ত নিজেদের করতে হত। এসব কাজ আগে কখনো করিনি বাড়িতে, তাই খুবই খারাপ লাগত। মিচিমিচি আমাকে এই শাস্তি দেওয়ার জন্য বাবা মার ওপর বড় রাগ এবং অভিমান হত তখন। কিন্তু চোখের ওপর দেখতুম, অন্য ছেলেরা সবাই সব করছে, তাই লজ্জায় এবং ভয়ে কাউকে কিছু বলতেও পারতুম না। একখানা বড়

টাই-সাইকুল ছিল, সোঁতে চড়ার জন্য বড় লোভ হ'ত। কিন্তু বড় ছেলেরা সোঁকে একচেটে করে রেখেছিল। অমন চাড়া সবাই ছিল আমার চেয়ে বড়, ফাক পেয়ে চড়ে বসলেই তারা কেউ না কেউ এসে কেড়ে নিত। বর্ষাবানুদের আনন্দিকা বাবার কথা হাচ্ছিল, তাই তাঁদের দাবিই ছিল সবচেয়ে বেশি।

বর্ষাবানুর ছোট 'তাই' শব্দ ছিল খান-আমার সমন্বয়ী। বড় সন্দর বড় শান্ত ছেলে, তবে ভারি রোখা ছিল। যে আমাদের সংগে খুব খেলা করত। শাপিনিকেতন ছেড়ে আসবার পর যখন হঠাৎ খবর পেলুম যে নেই, তখন মমতা বড় খারাপ হয়ে গেল।

ওখানে তখন শোয়ালের চেয়ে কিছু বড় আর নেকড়ের চেয়ে কিছু ছোট এক ধরনের আনোয়ারের খুন আনাগোনা ছিল, আমাদের ঘরের কাছেই এক একদিন তাঁদের দিনের বেলাও আসতে দেখেছি। বাবা আসতে তাঁকে বলাতে তিনি বললেন, "ওগুলো বেড়েল, ওরা মানুষকে ভয় পায়।" এর পরের ছুটির এসে তোমাদের সবাইকে একটা করে এলার-খান দিয়ে যান, সবাই কটি কটি করে শব্দ করলেই ওরা পানিয়ে বাবে। "আর যদি দু' চারটে ছাত্রা গায়ে নাগে তবে নন্দিক আর আসবে না।" তাঁর পরের সপ্তাহে শনিবার বাবা আমাদের সকলকে বন্ধুক এনে দিবেছিলেন। আমরা বেশ হয় তখন এগারো জন ছিলাম। সকলেরই হাতে মাঘস বেড়ে গিয়েছিল। ওই দিয়ে আমরা লক্ষ্যবের অভ্যাস শুরু করেছিলাম ও খেলবার একটা নতুন সরঞ্জাম পেয়েছিলাম। পাছের ফল পাড়ার চেষ্টাও করতুম ওই বন্ধুকের ছাত্রা দিয়ে।

গুরুদেব তখন আমাদের সংগে খুব মিশতেন। তাঁকে দেখলেই বড় আমদ হ'ত, একটুও ভয় করত না। তিনি আমাদের মুখে মুখে যাক্ত এবং বাংলা পড়াতেন। যদিও তার আগে আমাদের যাক্তের অক্ষর পরিচয় হ'তনি, তবু তিনি আমাদের একেবারে পাশিনির সূত্র সরিয়েছিলেন। তিনটি সূত্রের কথা এখনও মনে পড়ে, ১। অক্ষর সম্বন্ধে দীর্ঘ, ২। ইকোয়পটি, ৩। এচোয়-বাগবং। এ এর উচ্চারণ উ এর মত, অস্থহ 'ব' এর উচ্চারণ 'ও' 'যে' নেই, সব 'যে' বিসর্গের উচ্চারণ 'হ' এর মতো। আর কিছু এখনও মনে পড়েনা। গুরুদেব এলেই তাঁর ডান পায়ে ডান হাত ও বাঁ পায়ে বাঁ হাত রেখে দুই হাতের সংযোগ-স্থলে মাথা ঠেকিয়ে তাঁকে প্রণাম করতে হ'ত। এইরকম প্রণাম প্রণাম করতে তিনিই আমাদের শিখিয়েছিলেন। অনেক অনেক মড়ার মড়ার প্রলপ বলাতেন তিনি, খুব হাসি-তামাসা করতেন। আমাদের প্রত্যেককে বাড়ির কথা জিজ্ঞাসা করতেন, কে কি খেতে না করতে ডানবাগি, বাড়ির মধ্যে কাকে সবচেয়ে বেশি ভালোবাসি জানতে চাইতেন। তাঁদের বাড়ির ছেলে মেয়েদের কথাও বলতেন ও তাঁর মধ্যেই কখন কোন কাকে এসব কটকটো যাক্ত শ্রোত কিছু কিছু পড়িয়ে দিতেন। বইখি ছিল বলে মনে পড়েনা, তবে এত সহজে বুঝিয়ে দিতেন যে, প্রায় ঘণ্টা বড়র পরেও তাঁর কিছু মনে গেঁথে রয়েছে। বুঝ-বাক্য উপাধার মধ্যম ও এই একই ভাবে ইংরেজি, ইতিহাস, ভূগোল এইসব পড়াতেন। গুরুদেব অনুপস্থিত থাকলে এক একদিন যাক্ত এবং বাংলাও পড়াতেন। তখন তো মাত্র আট বছর বয়স, ইংরেজি কিই বা শিখেছি, তবু তাঁর পড়ানোর ফল যৌকু শিখেছিলাম তা আর ভুলিনি। তিনি অনেক দেশের গল্প করতেন। যে দেশের ডেন-ডোয়েরা কি ভাবে খেলে, কি ভাবে পড়ে, কি রকম ব্যবহার করে নিচ্ছেদের মধ্যে বা অন্যলোকের সংগে, সব বলতেন, আর পড়াতে পড়াতে উঠে গিয়ে

দেয়াল-আলমারিতে রাখা একটা বেশ বড়ো কেরোসিনের চওড়া মলতে দেওয়া সোঁতে একটা পেতলের ছোট্ট হাঁড়ি চড়ানো থাকতো সোঁতে দেখতেন। সোঁতানোর একদিকে অব দেওয়া ছিল 'তাই' দিয়ে ভেতরের প্রায় পাঁচ-ছয় ইঞ্চি মলতেন। কতটা স্বচ্ছ দেখতে পাওয়া যেত; আমাদের সোঁতে দেখতে খুব মজা লাগত। বোধহয় আতপ-চালের হবিয়ান তৈরি হ'ত। ভোঁতের মধ্যে আলু, পটোল, রাগ-আলু এই সব সিক্ত হ'ত, একটু পাওয়া বি দিয়ে 'তাই' খেতেন তিনি। একটা কৌপীন ও মাদাঙ্গীদের মতো জড়িয়ে একটা হাত-চান-পাঁচ খান পরতেন, একটা মেরজাই পরতেন আর একটা বোকাই চাদরের মতো চাদর মধ্যে মধ্যে গায়ে দিতেন। এক-আধদিন বাইরে যেতে বুঁতি পাঞ্জাবীও পরতে দেখেছি যেন। রেবার্চাদ মাস্টার-মশায় তো সর্বকণ আমাদের নিয়েই থাকতেন; জানে যেতেন, মাটি কেটে ফুঁবল খাউও তৈরী করতেন। রাত্রে এক ঘরেই শুতেন। তিনি যেন আমাদের বড়না ভিলেন, কি যত্নই না করতেন সবাইকে। তেল মাখানো, স্নান করানো খাওয়ানো, কাপড়চোপড়ের তরকার করা, অস্ত্রের সমর সেবা করা, সবই ছিল তাঁর কাজ। খোমাপিডি ছিল না, নিজে হাতে বমি, মলমূত্র সাক করতেন আমাদের। মালেরিয়া তখন অনেকেরই হ'ত স্বতরাং তাঁর দিনে রাত্রে বিশ্রাম ছিল না।

আমাদের পাঠভবন ছিল একটা বেশ বড় ঘর; দেয়াল আলমারি ও কাঠের আলমারিতে অনেক বই ছিল, আর একটা আলমারির তাকে অনেক খেলার সরঞ্জাম ছিল। ইনডোর খেলার থাকত তাঁর পরের ঘরটায়, সোঁতেও খুব ছোট ঘর নয়। এই দুটো ঘরের সামনেই বারান্দা ছিল। ইনডোর খেলার মধ্যে গোলোকধাধা, বাববন্দী, দশপাঁচিশ, ড্রাফ্ট, বিভাবসী, লুডো, সেনক অগু ল্যাডার এবং আরো দু'পাঁচ-রকম বিলেতী খেলা ছিল, একটা পি' প' এর সোঁতেও ছিল। সেই সংগে শ্রেণি পেশিন নিয়ে কানিকুটি খেলাও চলত, খাবার ঘন্টা পড়ার আগে ও পরে কিছুকণ। খাবার ঘন্টা পড়লে শোবার ঘরের খাটের তলা থেকে খালা খেলাস দাঁটি নিয়ে রান্না ঘরে ছাড়ির হ'তে হ'ত। খাবার পর বাসন মুখে বেজে খাটের তলায় বেধে আবার খেলা চলত যতকণ না পড়ার ঘন্টা পড়ে। আদি কুটির অর্থাৎ আমাদের শোবার ঘরখানা বেশ লম্বা ছিল। বারো তেরোখানা তক্তাপাশ পাতা ছিল। প্রত্যেকটার পর দু' হাত আন্দাজ ফাঁকা ছায়াখা ছিল। আমাদের প্রত্যেকের মাথার ও পায়ের দিকে একটা করে জানালা থাকতে বেশ ছাওয়া খেঁবত। সেই জানালাগুলোতে বই খাতাও রাখা চলত। খাটের নিচে তোরঙ্গ ও বাসনপত্র থাকত, যতরকি জড়ানো বিজানা খাটের ওপরেই থাকত একপাশে। এই খাটে বসেই আমাদের পড়াশোনা ও চায়ক করতে হ'ত। ঘরের দু' পাশের বারান্দার দড়ি মোজিরে কাপড় ঝুলানো হ'ত। পড়ার ঘরের বারান্দার টাই-সাইকেবটা থাকত, তার কথা আগে বলেছি। তখন কিণ্ডারগার্টিনের নাম জানতুম না আমরা, তবে পড়াশোনা এখনকার কিণ্ডারগার্টিনের মতই হ'ত মনে হয়। খেলা, পড়া, খাওয়া, আবার খেলা, পড়া এইভাবে চলত।

ভোঁরে ঘুম থেকে উঠেই অন্ধকার থাকতে মাঠে যেতে হ'ত। তারপর দাঁতন করে তেল মেখে তালপুকুরে স্নান করতে যেতে হ'ত। তখন তালপুকুরে বেশ জল ছিল। পুকুরে স্নান আগে করণও করিনি। আমাদের লগুনীর বাড়ির কাছেই গাংখা। ভারীরা জল আনত, সেই গাংখাজল বাসতিতে বেধে অস্ত্রতঃ দু'

ঘণ্টা গরম করে খান করার ব্যবস্থা ছিল। এখানে এসে যেনি বদলে গেল। ভরও করত, ঠাণ্ডাও লাগত। অলশ তখনও বড় ইন্দারানি ছিল, মালী জল তুলে দিত, তাতে কেউ কেউ ঘানও করত, কিন্তু যখন বড় ডেলেরা পুকুরে ঘান করতে যাচ্ছে তখন কুয়াতলায় ঘান করার কথা মনে এলেও নিয়ম ভাঙতে সাহস হয়নি। এই ঘানের ফল কিন্তু আমার পক্ষে ভাল হয়নি মোটেই।

ঘান যেরে নিছের নিছের কাপড় কেটে নিয়ে এসে বারান্দায় শুকোতে দিয়ে একখানা আসন নিয়ে উপাসনা করতে যেতে হ'ত কোনো গাছতলায়। উপাসনার কিই বা ছানতুম এই বয়সে, অগত্যা বড় ডেলেরদের দেখাদেখি চোখ বুজে বসে থাকতুম আর পিঠি-পিঠি করে দেখতুম কতক্ষণে তারা কেউ উঠে পড়ে। অমনি আমিও উঠে পড়তুম ও আসন রেখে এসে খানিক খেলা করে নিতুম। খানিক পরে ঘণ্টা পড়ত, তখন সবাই এক জায়গায় গেলি হয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে বেদমন্ত্র পড়তুম। তারপর ফল খাওয়া হত। কিছু আদাচোলা বা গুড় চোলা, তার সংগে মিছাড়া বা নিমকি বা হালুয়া, আর একবাটা দুধ। দুধটা আর চোলাটা রোজ থাকতই। এরপর আবার ঘণ্টা পড়ত, তখন নিছের নিছের আসন নিয়ে কোনো গাছতলায় ক্রাসে গিয়ে বসতে হ'ত। দুপুরে ভাত খাওয়ার ও বায়ন বুয়ে রাখার পর খানিকক্ষণ ছুটি, তারপর ঘণ্টা পড়লেই আবার ঘরের মধ্যেই বিকেলের ক্রাস বসত কারণ এখনকার মতো ছায়াতরু তখন ছিলনা ক্রাসের জন্য; বেশী রৌদ্রের সময় তাই বাইরে ক্রাস হ'ত না। পড়ানো, পড়া দেওয়া, লেখা, অংক কথা এইসব চলত কিছুক্ষণ। ক্রাসের আগে ও পরে আমরা খেলতে পেতুম। তারপর জলখাবার ঘণ্টা পড়ত। বিকেলে জলখাবার ছিল চারখানা লুচি ও একটু তরকারি, কোনোদিন বা মুগুনি আর একটা মিষ্টি, কোনোদিন পিঠি বা অনুটী-গোছের কোনো জিনিস। আশমের গরু ছিল, তাই দুধ বা পায়েরানি ভালোই হত। জলমোপের পর কোদাল নিয়ে রেবাচাঁদ মাইল-মশায়ের সংগে তাঁর নির্দেশমত পেতুর গাছ তুলে খেলার মতি তৈরি করার খেলা ও তারপর কিছুক্ষণ কুঁল নিয়ে দৌড়োদৌড়ি করা চলত। সন্ধ্যা হলে উপাসনার পর কোনো গাছতলায় বা ঘরে শিক্ষক-মশায়েরদের কেউ সবাইকে নিয়ে বসতেন, গরের চলে নানা দেশের নানা বিষয়ের কথা বলতেন। কিসের বিষয় যে আর মনে নেই, তবে রাতে দুই নিয়ে বসতে হ'ত না এটা বেশ মনে আছে। রাতে ভাত বা রাঁচি, ডাল, তরকারি, এইসবের সংগে দুধ বা পায়েরানি একটা কিছু থাকতই।

এইভাবে থাকতে থাকতে বেশ অভ্যাস হয়ে আসছিল, কিন্তু মধ্যে মধ্যে শরীরটা খারাপ লাগত। আমি আমার কাকাকে সংগী-হিসাবে পাব বলে তাকে কেবলই আসতে নিষেধিলাম। সে যখন এসে পড়ল তখন ওই শরীর-খারাপের ওপরেই তালপুকুরে ঘান করে একদিন আমার খুব বেশি জ্বর এসে গেল। জ্বর ছাড়া, আবার হল, এইরকম প্রায় মাসখানেক চলল। শেষে আমার বাবা আমার কাকা শৈলেন্দ্রমোহনকে ওখানে রেখে আমার নিয়ে হুগলীতে ফিরে এলেন। শাস্তিনিকেতনে চিকিৎসার তখনও স্ববন্দোবস্ত হয়নি, গুরুদেবই হোমিওপ্যাথিক বারোকেমিক কি সব ঔষধ দিয়েছিলেন, তাতে আমার জ্বর বন্ধ হল না। ম্যালেরিয়ার ধরে-ছিল, কিন্তু তখনও ম্যালেরিয়ার চিকিৎসার জন্য কুইনাইনের প্রচার হয়নি। হুগলীতে তিন চার মাসেও জ্বর ছাড়ল না, বাধ্য হয়ে কলকাতায় বাসা করে আমার চিকিৎসার জন্য বাবা মাকে

এসে থাকতে হল। তখন রাহেমোহন বাড়ি ছেলে শিমলা-অফলে নামকরা ডাক্তার, বোধহয় মেডিক্যাল কলেজের দ্বিতীয় দলের ডাক্তারি। তাঁর চিকিৎসার প্রায় তিন বছর থাকতে হয়েছিল। পথ ছিল রোল-ভাত, তাঁর আগে ডাক্তারি বেতে হ'ত প্রায়ই। সেই থেকে এই স্থাপসানি রোল ও চিনি দিয়ে সজ্জিত পায়েরা খেতে দিলে আছ প্রায় ঘণ্টা বছর পরেও মনে হয় যেন কখীর পথ খানি।

শিমলায় থাকতে একটু ভাল হলে বাবা আমাকে বৃন্দাবন উপাধ্যায় মশায়ের স্কুলে ভর্তি করে দিয়েছিলেন। উপাধ্যায় মশায় তখন শাস্তিনিকেতনে ডেডে কলকাতার শিমলায় এসে একটা স্কুল করেছিলেন, রেবাচাঁদ তাঁর সংগে এসেছিলেন। উপাধ্যায় মশায় একটা বড় ঘরে থাকতেন, সেই ঘরেরই বাবো চোখাটা ছেলে নিয়ে ক্রাস করতেন। সেই ঘরেরই দেয়াল-খানমারতে তাঁর তাঁড়ার ও রামার সরঞ্জাম থাকত। সেখানেও পড়ানোর মধ্যে এক কাককে তিনি চোখে নিছের রামাটা করে নিতেন। কোনো মিলেবাস ঘরে পড়ানো হ'ত না, শাস্তিনিকেতনের রীতিতে ইংরেজি, সংস্কৃত, অঙ্ক, ইতিহাস, ভূগোল, বাংলা সবই পড়াতেন তিনি।

খানি চলে আসবার পর আমার পিসতুতো ভাই বিজ্ঞানকুমার নুরোপাধ্যায় আশ্রমে পড়তে গেছিলেন। কিন্তু আমার কাকা ও বিজ্ঞানদা দুজনেই কয়েক মাস পরে জ্বর নিয়ে চলে আসেন। তাঁদের ভাণ্ডা ভালো ছিল, তাই তাঁদের আমার মতো তিন বছর ম্যালেরিয়ার ভুগতে হয়নি, শাপথির সেরে উঠেছিলেন। বিজ্ঞানদা পরে স্প্রিং কোর্সের প্রধান বিচারপতি হয়েছিলেন। আমার কাকা শৈলেন্দ্রমোহন তমলুক-পাঁশকুড়া-মাধিগড়, রাহাঙ্গাঙ্গী-নাগৌর প্রভৃতি নানা জায়গায় মোটর সার্ভিস প্রথম খুলেছিলেন, কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত তাতেই তিনি খুব অসুস্থ হন। সে সময়ে অর্ধাং প্রথম দলে আমরা যে এগারো জন ছিলাম তাঁদের সকলের নাম-অধিকাংশেরই পুরো নাম মনে নেই। তবে রথীবাবু, মহেশ্বরবাবু, শমীন্দ্র, অচি (অচ্যুত সরকার, চুচুড়ার একরচন্দ্র সরকার মশায়ের ডেবে, পরে মিলিটারী অ্যাকাউন্টিংয়ের সুপারি-টেন্ডেন্ট হয়েছিলেন), কালো (অশোক গুপ্ত, পরে নিজে 'বয়েজ নাসারি হোম' করেছিলেন, স্যাডলার কমিশনের প্রাঙ্গণা পেয়েছিলেন), গ্রাণ্ড অগ্নীয় গৌরা (গৌরগোবিন্দ গুপ্ত), অরুণ বন্দোপাধ্যায় (ও পরে বোধহয় কাশী মেমোরিয়াল কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ হয়েছিল) এই ক'জনের নাম মনে আছে। আমাদের বাড়ির তিন জনের নাম আগেই বলেছি, আর কারো নাম মনে নেই।

এর পর বহুদিন আর ওখানে যাঁইনি। আমার ভোটা ভাই প্রভাত যখন ওখানে পড়তে যায় সেই সময়ের পোড়াম পঁচিশ বছর পরে, সংশ্রুতি দু' তিন বার সাহেব পৌনে গেছি। এখন তো এক বিরাট বাপার! সে সব পুরানো জায়গা ঘরদোর কোনোটা নেই, অধিকাংশই খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় না, কোনো কোনোটার সংগে নতুন করে পরিচয় করতে হল। কত ডেবে মেয়ে, কত অধ্যাপক, কত সব ভবন, তার কত বাবস্থা! উত্তরাংশে গুরুদেবের কি চমৎকার বাড়ি বাগান! ভেবে আনন্দ হয়, এই বিরাট সৃষ্টিজ্ঞের গোড়ার দিকে আমারও ঘান ছিল এর মধ্যে, এই স্থাপত্যের ভিত্তিতে এর মধ্য পরিণতির জন্য সাংস্কৃতিক মালমসলার মধ্যে আমিও ছিলাম একদিন। কাঠবিড়ালী সাধন-বন্ধনে সাহায্য করে শ্রীরামচন্দ্রের আশীর্বাদ পেয়েছিল, আমার মতো গুরুদেবের যেসব অধ্যাত অজ্ঞাত ছাত্র লোকচক্ষুর অগোচরে তাঁর আদর্শ জীবনে পালন করতে কিছুটা চেষ্টা করেছে বা করছে তারাও কি তাঁর আশীর্বাদ পাবে না?



রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও আন্তর্জাতিকতা

মোহিত মৈত্র

মানুষের বন্ধন-মুক্তি ও মর্যাদা-প্রতিষ্ঠার চারণ করি রবীন্দ্রনাথ। মানব পেন, মানব মর্যাদা, মানবের ঐশ্বর্য ও সংগ্রামের জয়গান গেয়েছেন। দেশের ভৌগোলিক গভী ও কালের সীমা-রেখাকে অতিক্রম করে তাঁর সেই গান পৃথিবীর ঘর স্বরের সকল মানুষের অস্তরে প্রতিধ্বনি গেলে।

কয়েক শত বছর আগে বাঙালি আর একজন করি গেয়েছিলেন: 'শুন যে মানুষ ভাই, সবার উপরে মানুষ সত্য, তাহার উপরে নাই'। এই প্রাচীন বাণীর নব-রূপায়ণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্যকৃতি মূল কেন্দ্র। মানবতাবাদ এবং মানুষের ব্যক্তিকেই ভিত্তি করে বিকশিত হয়ে উঠেছে তাঁর বিশ্ববোধ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন: "মানুষের মহত্ত্ব প্রভাতের সূর্যের মতো।" দিগন্ত তার যন্ত্রের বজ্রদূরে আলোর মতো যেদূরে পৌঁছায়। মানুষের জীবন-যাত্রা বর্তমান জীবনকে অতিক্রম করে চলে, তার সকল প্রজন্ম আধিকারীদের জন্য। মানুষের মধ্যে যারা মহত্ত্ব, তারা বাস করেন অদৃশ্য কালে, তাঁরা পশ্চত করেন ভাবী যুগের আশ্রয়। বলবো না যে তাঁদের জীবন দুঃখ থেকে মুক্ত। দুঃখ তাঁদের জীবনে সৃষ্টির অধি। তাই নিম্নে চিরজীবনের সম্পদ মানুষের জন্য তাঁরা রচনা করেন, যেমন পাঠ করে আপন অস্তরে সূর্যের উপাসক; সূর্যালোককে মজ্জাগত করে ফলে ফুলে নিজেদের বিকশিত করাই তাঁর উপায়। মানুষের সাংসার দুঃখ আছে: তার এই তাপের প্রয়োজন আপনাতঃ নির্মাণের জন্য। আপনাতঃ আপনাকে পরিণতি দেবার জন্য। মানুষের মধ্যে যারা শ্রেষ্ঠ তাঁরা সেই দুঃখকে তেজ রূপে মর্মের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করে জীবনকে শস্য সম্পদে ফলবান করেন—সেই সম্পদ দান করেন এমন সকল মানুষকে যারা তাদের জন্য ও নয়, এখনও যারা আসেন।"

আজ থেকে শত বর্ষ আগে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখন ভূমিষ্ঠ হন তখন ভারতের শিক্ষিত সমাজ পাশ্চাত্য ন্যাশনালিজম বা জাতীয়তাবাদের আদর্শে প্রভাবিত। লিবারেলিজমের পথ অনুসরণ করে রাজনৈতিক কর্মকাণ্ড কিছুটা শুরু হয়েছে। ১৮৫৮ সালের প্রথম স্বাধীনতার যুদ্ধ যা পঁচিশ ইতিহাসে সিপাই-বিদ্রোহ নামে খ্যাত, নীলচাষীদের বিদ্রোহ, ওয়াংখি আন্দোলন প্রভৃতির প্রভাব শিক্ষিত সমাজের ওপর বিস্তার লাভ করেছে। কবি ঈশ্বর গুপ্ত, রংলাল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র প্রভৃতি মনীষীদের লেখায় অনুপ্রেরিত হয়ে আমাদের দেশের লোক তখন বলা শুরু করেছে: 'দেশের কুকুর পুজি বিদেশের ঠাকুর ফেলিয়া'। জাতীয়তাবাদই তখন শিক্ষিত সমাজের জীবনের চরম প্রকাশ ও পরম গৌরব বলে পরিগণিত হত। রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের উদার চিন্তাধারা ও আন্তর্জাতিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি প্রসার লাভ করতে না পেরে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের গভীর মধ্যেই আবদ্ধ হয়ে রইল।

এই জাতীয়তাবাদের হাওয়া তখন জোড়াসাঁকোর ঠাকুর বাড়ীতেও প্রবেশ লাভ করেছে। নবগোপাল মিত্রের ন্যাশনাল মেলা, জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথের বিপ্লব অনুষ্ঠানের জন্য গুপ্তসমিতি

স্থাপন, বাংলা ভাষায় চিঠি লেখা প্রভৃতি ঠাকুরবাড়ীর যুব-সম্প্রদায়ের মনে জাতীয় ভাব বিকশিত করে তুলেছে। অপর দিকে রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের চিন্তাধারা ব্রাহ্মসমাজের মধ্যে বিলুপ্ত হয়ে গেলেও যুবক রবীন্দ্রনাথের মনে গভীর রেখা পাত করে। তাঁকে তিনি আদর্শ পুরুষ বলে মনে করতেন। এ সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছেন: "তিনি মনুষ্যত্বের ভিত্তির উপরে ভারতবর্ষকে সমস্ত পৃথিবীর সাথে মিলিত করিবার জন্য একাকী দাঁড়াইয়াছিলেন। কোনো প্রথা, কোনো সংস্কার তাঁহার দৃষ্টিকে রুদ্ধ করিতে পারে নাই। আশ্চর্য্য উদার হৃদয় ও উদার বুদ্ধির দ্বারা তিনি পূর্বকে পরিত্যাগ না করিয়া পশ্চিমকে গ্রহণ করিতে পারিয়াছিলেন। আমাদিগকে জানিতে দিয়াছেন, আমরা সমস্ত পৃথিবীর, আমাদেরই জন্য বুদ্ধ, খৃষ্ট, মহম্মদ জীবন গ্রহণ ও জীবন দান করিয়াছেন।"

এই বিশ্ব-বোধ, বিশ্ব-মানবের সাথে যোগাযোগ উপলব্ধি করা ভারতীয় চিন্তাধারার বৈশিষ্ট্য। উপনিষদ এই বাণীই প্রচার করেছে এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথের পিতা মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ উপনিষদকেই জীবনের পেরা রূপে গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। মহর্ষির কাছ থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ উপনিষদের শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করেন এবং প্রভাবিত হন। তাই দেশকে ভালবাসলেও, দেশের মানুষকে ভালবাসলেও তিনি জাতীয়তাবাদের সংकीर्णতাকে পরিহার করতে পেরেছেন। শান্তি ও বিশ্ব-মৈত্রী—উপনিষদের এই বাণীর ওপরেই তাঁর দেশ প্রেম প্রতিষ্ঠিত।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছেন:

'সার্থক জন্ম আমার
জন্মেছি এ দেশে।
সার্থক জন্ম মাগো,
তোমার ভালবেসে।'

স্বদেশী যুগে বংগ জননীর বর্ণনা প্রসঙ্গে তিনি বলেছেন:

'ডান হাতে তোর খড়গ ফলে,
বাঁ হাত করে শংকা হরণ।
দুই নয়নে স্নেহের হাসি,
ললাট-নেত্র আগুন বরণ।'

এই স্বদেশিকতা ও দেশপ্রেমকে তিনি ক্ষুদ্র গভীর মধ্যে আবদ্ধ করে রাখেন নি। বিশ্ব নিখিলকে তাঁর বিশাল হৃদয়ের মধ্যে অনুভব করেছেন। তিনি বলেছেন:

"আমি পৃথিবীর কবি, যেথা তার
যত ওঠে ধ্বনি
আমার বাঁশীর স্বরে সাড়া
তার জাগ্রিত তখনি।"



IN GERMANY

জার্মানিতে



TAGORE IN
JAPAN

জাপানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ

শিলাইদহে প্রজাদের সঙ্গে



WITH HIS TENANTS
AT SHELIDAH

মানবতার কবি হিসাবেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই স্বদেশিকতা ও দেশপ্রেমের উদ্গোধনা এবং মানবতার কবি হিসাবেই তিনি বিশ্ব-মানবের সাথে যোগাযোগ স্থাপনে আবদ্ধ—বিশ্ব-মানবের বাধা ও বেদনা তাঁর অন্তরে মাড়া জাগায়। 'তাই তাঁর আন্তর্জাতিকতা স্বাভাবিকভাবেই বাদ দিয়ে নয়। মানবতার কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ আন্তর্জাতিকতা ও স্বাভাবিকতাবোধের এক নিয়মকর সমন্বয় বা সম-সীমানা লোপ করে বিশ্বকে একাকী সংসার করতে চেয়েছে। কবি তাই লিখেছেন :

বিদেশে অচেনা ফুল পশিক কবিরে ডেকে কহে—
“যে দেশ আমার, কবি, সেই দেশ তোমারো কি নহে?”

শিল্প-বিপ্লবের পরে পাশ্চাত্য ভূখণ্ডে যে উগ্র জাতীয়তাবাদের অভ্যুদয় হয় তার যোগেই কল্যাণী বিপ্লবের মানস, নৈত্রী, আদ্যাত্মিক বাণী ভূখণ্ডের মত ভেসে যায়। এই জাতীয়তাবাদের ফলেই সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ও উপনিবেশিকতার উদ্ভব হয়। জাতীয়তাবাদের নামে দুর্বল অসহায় মানুষের ওপর যে অত্যাচার, শোষণ ও উৎপীড়ন চলেছে তা ইতিহাসকে কলঙ্কিত করেছে। তখন বঙ্গের লিখিত “চীনে মরণের ব্যবসায়” নামক একটি গ্রন্থে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই কথাটিই বেশ স্পষ্ট করে তুলে বলেছেন। তিনি লিখেছেন : “একটি সমগ্র জাতিকে অর্থের লোভে বিস পান করানো হইল। এমনতর নির্দারক ঐশী বৃত্তি কখনো শুনা যায় নাই। চীন কাঙ্গারো কছিল—‘আমি অহিংসে খাইব না।’ ইরাক নবিক কছিল ‘সে কি হয়?’ চীনের হাত দুইটি বাণিয়া তাহার মুখের মধ্যে কামান দিয়া অহিংসে ঠাণিয়া দেওয়া হইল। দিয়া কছিল—‘সে অহিংসে খাইবে তাহার দাম দাও।’ বঙ্গদিন হইল ইরাকেরা চীনে এই অপূর্ণ বাণিজ্য চালাইতেছেন।”

জাতীয়তাবাদের এই নতুন রূপ রবীন্দ্রনাথের উদার মনকে পীড়িত করেছে। তাই তিনি জাতীয়তাবাদকে কোন দিনই গ্রহণ করতে পারেন নাই। তিনি বলছেন : “বস্তুতঃ এই অন্ধ্রা নেশনতন্ত্রই মূলতঃ ব্যাপি। মিথ্যার দ্বারা হউক, প্রেমের দ্বারা হউক, নিজেদের কাছে নিজেকে বড়ো করিয়া প্রমাণ করিতেই হইবে এবং সেই উপলক্ষে অন্য নেশনকে ক্ষুদ্র করিতে হইবে, ইহা নেশনের ধর্ম, ইহা সাম্রাজ্যতন্ত্রের প্রধান অবলম্বন। প্রাচ্যের গোরে, ঠেলাঠেলি, অন্যায় ও ঘর্ষ প্রকার মিথ্যাচারের হাত হইতে নেশনতন্ত্রকে উপরে তুলিতে পারে, এমন সভ্যতার নিদর্শন তো আমরা এখনও যুরোপে দেখিতে পাই না।”

“পরস্পরকে যথার্থরূপে জানা শুনা কেনন করিয়া সম্ভব হইবে। নেশনের মেরুদণ্ডই যে স্বার্থ। স্বার্থের বিরোধ অবশ্যম্ভাবী এবং স্বার্থের সংঘাত মানুষকে অন্ধ করিবেই। ইংরেজ যদি স্ফূর্ত গণিয়ায় কোনও প্রকার সংযোগ ঘটাইতে পারে ফ্রান্স তখনই সচকিত হইয়া ভাবিতে থাকিবে, ইংরেজের বলবৃদ্ধি হইতেছে। প্রত্যক্ষ সংঘাত না হইলেও পরস্পরের সম্মুখিতেও পরস্পরের চিত্তকে বিঘাত করে। এক নেশনের প্রবলতা অন্য নেশনের পক্ষে সর্বদাই আশংকাজনক। এ হলে বিরোধ বিষেষ অন্ধতা মিথ্যাপ্রবাদ সভ্যগোপন, এ সমস্ত না ঘটিয়া থাকিতে পারে না।” (বিরোধমূলক আদর্শ—রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, দশম খণ্ড)

এই প্রবন্ধের শেষেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছেন : “তা ছাড়া পিনাশের চেহারা অনেক সময় চন্দ্রাবেশী। অনেক সময় পরিপূর্ণ সম্পদ তাহার মুখোশের মতো। কথিত আছে, ক্ষয়কাশে রোগীর

কপোলে রক্তিম-লাবণ্য কুণ্ডিয়া উঠে। সম্প্রতি উত্তরোত্তর ব্যাপ্য-মান মিলিটারিদের রক্তিমায় যুরোপের গণ্ডস্থল যে চিত্তকে ছইয়া উঠিতেছে, সে কি স্বাস্থ্যের লক্ষণ? গ্রাহ্যর ন্যাশনালিজমের ব্যাপি; অতিনন্দ সফীতির ন্যায় তাহার হৃদয়কে, তাহার মর্মহানকে, তাহার ধর্মনীতিককে অক্রিয় করিতেছে, ইহা কি আমরা প্রত্যহ দেখিতে পাইতেছি না?” (রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী—দশম খণ্ড)

প্রথম বিশ্বযুদ্ধের প্রাক্কালে তিনি উপলব্ধি করলেন জাতীয়তাবাদের বিপদ। উপর মানবিকতা ও ন্যায়বিচার-বোধ যুরোপ থেকে নির্বাসিত হয়ে গিয়েছে। তার পরিবর্তে ‘স্বার্থে স্বার্থে’ বেবেছে সমগ্রী। এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা ও দক্ষিণ আমেরিকার কোটি কোটি মানুষের ওপর নির্ভীক ভার চলেছে জাতীয়তাবাদ যন্ত্র ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ও সামরিকবাদের অধার সৃষ্টি, শোষণ ও উৎপীড়ন। পুনর্বারে ঐতিহ্য ও স্বল্পর করে তুলতে হলে এই জাতীয়তাবাদের দ্বিপ্রান্ত থেকে মানুষকে বাঁচাতে হবে। তাই তিনি বলছেন : “Nationalism is a great misadventure.” অর্থাৎ মানুষের কাতর হৃদয়কে ভাষা দিয়ে বোলছেন : “মাত্র প্রথম স্বাক্ষর মধ্যে রক্ত প্রোথের মধ্যে এই বাণী সমগ্র মানুষের হৃদয়-ধ্বনির মধ্যে ছেঁকে উঠেছে। এই বাণী তাহার কবচের কবচকে আকাশকে নির্দাশ করে করে চলেছে। সমস্ত মানব জাতিকে বাঁচাও, মানাকে বাঁচাও।” (ঐতিহ্যিকতন-রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, দশম খণ্ড)

১৯১৬ সালে কবি পেলেন জাপানে এবং তার পরে আমেরিকায়। দেখলেন সেখানে জাতীয়তাবাদের নীত্যাঙ্গ রূপ—নর্থ বিক্রেতার চরম অসুখতা। বাধা এবং বেদনার অন্তর তাঁর আঁতড়ত হয়ে গেল। জাতীয়তাবাদের বিরুদ্ধে মত প্রকাশ করলেন কবি। বললেন যে পাশ্চাত্য ন্যাশনালিজমের পরিণতি যুদ্ধ, দ্বিপ্রান্ত ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদ। শোনাগেল তাদের প্রাচ্য জাতীয়তাবাদ সমন্বয়ের বাণী যা মানুষের হৃদয়ে শান্তি ও বিশ্বনৈত্রীকে রূপায়িত করে তুলতে চায়। জাপান চায়—আমেরিকা শুভ না—তাঁর কথা। বিচলিত হয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখলেন : “মাত্র যুরোপের সমগ্র পোড়ো জাপানকে দেখলুম কোরিয়ায়, দেখলুম চীনে। তার মিষ্ট বসন্ত অধিকার-লব্ধনকে মিশ্র করলে যে মহাধায়ে মজির বের করে যুরোপের ইতিহাস থেকে। কী করে মিলতে হয় জাপান তা শিবল না, কী করে মিলতে হয় যুরোপের কাছ থেকে সেই শিক্ষা হই যে হাত থাকিবে মিল।” (কালান্তর—রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, দ্বাদশ খণ্ড)

যুরোপে মানুষের হতালীলা এবং জাপান, আমেরিকা পড়তি দেশে জাতীয়তাবাদের দানবীয় রূপ কবির মনেদর্শনীয় উদার মনকে বিস্মিত করলে। এর পেছনে তিনি দেখতে পেলেন মানুষের ব্যক্তিগত ও দলগত স্বার্থ এবং লোভ। কবির মতে একমাত্র মানুষের পরিপূর্ণতার প্রতিটাই এই স্বার্থ ও লোভকে দূর করে বিশ্বকে একটি পরিবারে পরিপূর্ণ করতে পারে। বেদনাতুর কবি ক্ষুব্ধ হয়েই লিখলেন : “কোনক দিন ধরিয়া চোখ বুজিয়া আমরা বিল্লিতি সভ্যতার হাতে আত্মসমর্পণ করিয়াছিলাম। ভাবিয়া-ছিলাম যে সভ্যতা স্বার্থকে অতিভূত করিয়া বিশ্বনৈত্রীতা ও বিশ্ব-জনের শৃঙ্খল-সুজির পথে সমগ্র-প্রেম-শান্তির অনুকূলে অগ্রসর হইতেছে। কিন্তু আজ হঠাৎ চমক ভাবিবার সময় আসিয়াছে। সমস্ত যুরোপ আজ অজ্ঞেয়ম্বে দগ্ধ হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। ব্যবসায় বুদ্ধি তাহার ধর্মবুদ্ধিকে অতিক্রম করিতেছে। আমরা বাড়ির আশংকার পাখী যেমন আপন নীড়ের দিকে ছোটো তেমনটাই বায়ু-

কোণে রক্ত মেঘ দেখিয়া পূর্বদেশ হঠাৎ আপনার নীভের সম্মানে উড়িবার উপক্রম করিয়াছে।” (ভারতবর্ষ—রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী চতুর্থ খণ্ড)

মানবতার কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঊর্ধ্ব জাতীয়তাবাদকে স্ব্যাস করে যেখানে বিশ্ব-মৈত্রীর ভিত্তিতে আন্তর্জাতিকতার সৌন্দর্য প্রড়ে তোলার আদ্যম্ন জ্ঞানালেন। তিনি ঘোষণা করলেন : “There is only one history – the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one. And we are content in India to suffer for such a great cause.”

এই আন্তর্জাতিকতার আদর্শকে শক্তিশালী করে তোলার জন্যই তিনি ১৯১৯ সালে রম্য রোন্স, বারবুয়ে, ফ্রান্স, বার-লু ও রায়েল প্রভৃতির সাথে যুক্ত হয়ে “মানব আশ্রয় স্বাধীনতার ঘোষণা” প্রচার করেন। জাতীয়তাবাদকে দূর করবার আদ্যম্ন জানিয়ে তিনি লিখেছিলেন : “কোন জাতি তার জাতীয় স্বার্থকে পৃথকীভূত করে তার জাতীয়তাকে সংকীর্ণ করে তুলবে— তা হবে না, ইতিহাস বিস্মৃতার এই আদেশ। মানুষ সেই জাতীয় দানবের পায়ে প্রতিদিন বসে নরবলির উদ্যোগ করেছে। আজ তাই সেই নরদেবতার মন্দির ভাঙবার প্রকম হয়েছে।” (শাহিনিকে তন—রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, যোড়শ খণ্ড)

ঊর্ধ্ব সংকীর্ণ জাতীয়তাবাদের বুনিরাদ চূর্ণ বিচূর্ণ করে তিনি যে আন্তর্জাতিকতা প্রতিষ্ঠার আয়োজন করেন তা তাঁর বিশ্বভারতীর আদর্শের মধ্যে রূপায়িত হয়ে ওঠে। তিনি প্রচার করলেন : “সমস্ত কৃত্রিম বেড়ালাল ভেঙে যাবার যুগ এসেছে ; যা বিশ্বের মধ্যে মৌলিকভাবে সমুদ্র দাপটে পারবে শুধু তাই চিক থাকবে।” একখানি চিঠিতে তিনি লিখেছেন : “ভবিষ্যতের জন্য যে বিশ্বজাতির মধ্যমিলনবাজের প্রতিষ্ঠা হচ্ছে, তার প্রথম আয়োজন এই লোলপুনের প্রাস্তরেই হবে। এই জায়গাটিকে সমস্ত জাতিগত ভূগোল বৃত্তান্তের অতীত করে তুলব এই আমার মনে আছে—সর্বমানবের জয়সংগা এখানে রোপণ হবে।”

১৯২১ সালে ‘সদ মানবের যোগ মানবের সেতু’ রূপে বিশ্ব-ভারতী প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। এই আদর্শের মধ্যে দিয়েই কবির আন্তর্জাতিকতার বাণী মূর্ত হয়ে উঠে। এই আদর্শ ব্যাখ্যা করতে গিয়ে তিনি বলেছেন : “বুদ্ধ ও যক্ষির ভিতর দিয়ে যে নিদারুণ দুঃখ যুরোপকে আলোড়িত করে তুলেছে তার অর্থ হচ্ছে এই যে নেশান-রূপের মধ্যে মানুষ আপন গতাকে আবৃত করে ফেলেছে। মানুষের আশ্রা বলেছে, ‘অপাবনু’—আবরণ উদ্ঘাটিত করো। মানুষদের প্রকাশ আচ্ছাদন হয়েছে বলে স্বজাতির নামে পাপাচরণ সম্বন্ধে মানুষ একদিন এমন পুষ্ট উদ্ধতা করতে পেরেছে যে, তাতে তার কোনো ক্ষতি হয় নি, লাভই হয়েছে। অবশেষে আজ কোনও এখন আপনার মুখ আপন প্রথম করতে আবৃত করেছে, তখন যুরোপে নেশন আপনার মূর্তি দেখে আতঙ্কিত হয়ে উঠেছে।” এই নব প্রতিষ্ঠিত বিশ্বভারতীর লক্ষ্য হল : যত্র বিশ্বঃ ভবত্যেকনীভম্।

এই আন্তর্জাতিকতার বাণী মনে প্রাণে গ্রহণ করবার জন্য তিনি মানুষকে ডাক দিয়ে বললেন : “যে বুদ্ধ হয়ে গেল তা নূতন যুগে পৌঁছবার সিংহদ্বার স্বরূপ। এই লড়াইয়ের মধ্য দিয়ে একটা সার্বজাতিক যজ্ঞ নিমন্ত্রণ রক্ষা করবার প্রকম এসেছে। তা শেষ হয়ে স্বর্গারোহণের পর্ব এখনও আরম্ভ হয়নি। আরও ভাঙবে,

সংকীর্ণ বেড়া ভেঙে যাবে, ঘর ছাড়ার দলকে এখনও পথে পথে ধরতে হবে।” (রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী—দ্বাদশ খণ্ড)

যে তাগ ছাড়া বিশ্বমৈত্রী প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়া সম্ভব নয়, লোভকে বর্জন না করে আন্তর্জাতিকতার ভিত্তি রচনা করা অসম্ভব, সেই তাগের ছবি যোবিরেৎ রাশিয়ায় দেখে কবি খুশী হলেন। তিনি লিখেছেন : “উপনিষদের একটা কথা আমি এখানে এসে খুব স্পষ্ট করে বুঝেছি—না গৃহঃ—লোভ করো না। কেন লোভ করবে না। যেহেতু সমস্ত কিছু এক যতোর দ্বারা পরিবাস্ত। ব্যক্তিগত লোভেতেই সেই একের উপলব্ধির মধ্যে বাধা আনে। তেন তাহেতন ভুঞ্জীথা। সেই একের থেকে যা আসছে তাকেই ভোগ করো। এরা আর্থিক দিক থেকে সেই কথাটাই বলেছে। সমস্ত মানব মানবদের মধ্যে এরা একটি অস্থিত মানব গতাকেই বড়ো বলে মনে ; সেই একের খোঁজে উৎপন্ন যা কিছু এরা বলে তাকেই সকলে মিলে ভোগ করো।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি—রবীন্দ্রনাথ)

যোবিরেৎ রাশিয়ায় নভেম্বর বিপ্লবের পেছনে যে আন্তর্জাতিকতার বাণী আছে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবশেষে তাকে অভিনন্দন জানিয়ে বলছেন : “একদিন ফরাসী বিদ্রোহ ঘটেছিল এই অশাস্যের প্রভাব। সেদিন যোগ্যকার পাড়িতেরা বুঝেছিল এই অশাস্যের অপমান ও দুঃখ বিশ্বব্যাপী। তাই সেদিনকার বিপ্লবে সত্য, সৌভাষ্টি ও স্বাতন্ত্র্যের বাণী স্বদেশের পত্তী পেরিয়ে স্বনিত হয়েছিল। কিন্তু চিকল না। এদের এখানকার বিপ্লবের বাণীও বিশ্বব্যাপী। আজ পৃথিবীতে অস্তিত এই একটা দেশের লোক স্বাধীনতার স্বার্থের উপরেও সমস্ত মানুষের স্বার্থের কথা চিন্তা করছে। এ বাণী চিরদিন চিকবে কিনা কেউ বলতে পারে না। কিন্তু স্বজাতির সমগ্র সমস্ত মানুষের সমগ্র অস্তিত, এ কথাটা বর্তমান যুগের অস্তিত্বিত কথা। একে স্বীকার করতেই হবে।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি— ১৩-১৪ পৃষ্ঠা)

কিন্তু যুরোপ, আমেরিকা ও জাপান ঊর্ধ্ব জাতীয়তাবাদ যজ্ঞত সাম্রাজ্যবাদ ও সামরিকবাদ বিশ্বমৈত্রীর ভিত্তি ওপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত আন্তর্জাতিকতার আদর্শের বিরুদ্ধে তাঁর আক্রমণ চালায়। হিসে আক্রমণ আসে কাগজবাদ ও মাজিবাদের কাছ থেকে। এশিয়া এবং আফ্রিকায় এই বর্বরতার চরম প্রকাশ ঘটে। মানুষের পেয়ে ওপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত যে বিশ্ব-মৈত্রীর আদর্শ কবির একমাত্র ধ্যান ছিল— সেই চিন্তাধারার চরম আঘাত লাগে এই সময়। কিন্তু এই দুর্দৈবের মধ্যেও তিনি মানুষের ওপর বিশ্বাস হারাণ নাই— “মনুষ্যদের অস্তিত্বীন প্রতিকারহীন পরাভবকে” তিনি চরম বলে গ্রহণ করতে পারেন নি। অপূর্ণ আশ্রবিশ্বাস নিয়ে তিনি সেদিন লিখেছিলেন : “আজ পারের দিকে যাত্রা করেছে। পিছনের ঘাটে কী দেখে এলুম, কী রেখে এলুম ? ইতিহাসের কী অক্লিৎ-কর উচ্চিষ্ট, সভ্যতাজিমানের পরিকীর্ণ ভগ্নস্থূপ। কিন্তু মানুষের প্রতি বিশ্বাস হারানো পাপ, যে বিশ্বাস শেষ পর্যন্ত রক্ষা করব। আশা করব, মহাপ্রলয়ের পরে বৈরাগ্যের মেঘমুক্ত আকাশে ইতি-হাসের একটি নির্মল আশ্রপ্রকাশ হরতো আরম্ভ হবে এই পূর্বাচলের সূর্যোদয়ের দিগন্ত থেকে আর একদিন অপরাধিত মানুষ নিজের জয়যাত্রার অভিযানে সকল বাধা অতিক্রম করে অগ্রসর হবে তার মহৎ সর্বাদা ফিরে পাবার পথে। মনুষ্যদের অস্তিত্বীন, প্রতিকার-হীন পরাভবকে চরম বলে বিশ্বাস করাকে আমি অপরাধ মনে করি। “এই কথা আজ বলে যাব, প্রবল প্রতাপশালীরাও ক্ষমতা মদমত্ততা আয়ত্তরিতা যে নিরাপদ নয় তারই প্রমাণ হবার দিন আজ উপস্থিত হয়েছে।” (—সভ্যতার সংকট)



রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও স্বদেশী আন্দোলন

শ্রীযোগেন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্ত

আমাদের গ্রাম প্রান্তবর্তিনী পুরাতন বৃক্ষপুত্র নদের তীরবর্তী।
পদানন্দীর শাখা প্রবাহিনীর তীরে ছিল আমাদের বাসপল্লী
বিক্রমপুরের একটি গ্রাম। একদিন নদীর তীরে গুণিলাস,
আমাদের গ্রামবাসী একটি যুবক—কলিকাতা প্রবাসী,—তিনি
গাছিতেছিলেন স্তম্ভুর কণ্ঠে—

“একবার তোরা না বলিয়া ডাক
জগৎ জনের শ্রবণ জুড়াক,
হিনাদি পামাণ কেঁদে গলে যাক,
মুখ তুলে আছি চাহরে।”

দাঁড়া দেখি তোরা আয় পর ভুলি,
হৃদয়ে হৃদয়ে ঢুটুক বিজুলি—
পাত্ত গগনে কোটি শির তুলি
নিউয়ে আছি গাহরে॥
বিশ কোটি কণ্ঠে না বলে ডাকিলে
রোমাঞ্চ উঠিবে অনন্ত নিখিলে,
বিশ কোটি ছেলে মায়েরে দেখিলে
দশদিক স্তখে হাসিলে।”

গানটি শুনিয়া চিত্ত মুগ্ধ হইল। এমন মধুর স্বর এমন
প্রাণের আহ্বান ত কখনো শুনি নাই। গ্রামের মধ্য ইংরাজী
বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র। সেই সন্ধ্যায় সঙ্গীতের স্বরে স্বরে
একটি স্বরতরঙ্গ বহিয়া গেল। আসন্ন সন্ধ্যায় পূর্ণচন্দ্র
বিকশিত জ্যোৎস্না পুলকিত সন্ধ্যা হাগিয়া উঠিল, নদীর জল
উচ্ছলিয়া উঠিল, নৌকা যাত্রীরা স্রবের সঙ্গে স্রব মিলাইয়া
তরী বাহিয়া চলিয়া গেল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচিত এই গান সেই
গুণিলাস প্রাণ গায়ক মহাশয়ের নিকট। গায়কের নাম হেমচন্দ্র
সেন। তিনি আমাদের সকলের বার বার অনুরোধে আরো
কয়েকটি গান গাহিলেন সব গানই শিখিয়াছিলেন তিনি
কলিকাতায়। তখন ত জানিতামনা রবীন্দ্রনাথকে। অনেক দিন
পরে তাঁহার সাক্ষাতে অনেক কথা জানিলাম এবং একদিন
তাঁহাকে দেখিবারও সৌভাগ্য হইয়াছিল, সে পরের কথা।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর কবি, ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে
জন্ম। তিরোভাব বিংশশতাব্দীর প্রায় মধ্য কালে। এই
ঐদীর্ঘকাল তিনি বাংলার ও ভারতের জাতীয় জীবনে, সাহিত্য
ক্ষেত্রে দিয়াছেন—শতশত দীপ্তিমান মণিরত্নমালা। তাঁহার জীবন
খাড়া নদীর ধারার মত দিকে দিকে প্রবাহিত হইয়া নব নব
জীবনী শক্তি সঞ্চারিত করিয়াছে। তাঁহার জীবন দর্শন ছিল

বহুমুখী। কাব্য, নাটক, উপন্যাস, সঙ্গীত, প্রবন্ধ, রাষ্ট্রনীতি,
শ্রমশিক্ষিতা ও দেশপ্রেমিকতায় করিয়াছেন উজ্জীবিত। ঊনবিংশ
শতাব্দীর পরিবর্তনের যুগ। ভাঙ্গনের যুগ। যুগ সঙ্কট বা
যুগ পরিবর্তনের যুগ। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র, দীনবন্ধু, হেমচন্দ্র, নবীনচন্দ্রের
আবির্ভাব ও অভ্যুদয়ের কালে—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর
সেই নূতন অধি ছাত্রের সর্বশেষ ও শ্রেষ্ঠ ছাত্ররূপে বঙ্কিম-
বিরেকানন্দের যুগকেও অতিক্রম করিয়া—আমাদের কালেও
বিদ্যমান ছিলেন; তিনি বাঙ্গালীর সেই নব-উদিত মনোভূমির
নূতন পলি মৃত্তিকা নিরন্তর কর্ষণ করিয়া প্রায় শতাব্দীকালের
সাধনা অসাধ্যত রাখিয়াছেন। আধুনিক যুগের যে ভাব ও
চিন্তারশি সর্ব-মানবীয় সাধনার অঙ্গীভূত না হইয়া পারে না,
তাহার সেই গভীর সঞ্চারী যোতোধারাকে তিনি আমাদের
পাখের অনুরূপ তরঙ্গে তরঙ্গারিত করিয়া যে ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের
সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন সেই ভাব চিন্তার অভিনবতা ও সুস্বাভাব
বাক্য করিবার জন্য বাংলা বাক্যভঙ্গিকে যে ভাবে নিয়ত নূতন
সামর্থ্যে মণ্ডিত করিয়াছেন, তাহা অপেক্ষা জীবন্ত ও যথার্থ্যপ্রা
কি হইতে পারে? রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যের আদি হইতে শেষ পর্যন্ত
পর্যবেক্ষণ করিলে দেখা যাইবে যে, এ সাহিত্য অতিশয় গতিশীল
—হঠাৎ একটি বৃহৎ জনাশয়ের আকারে শেষ বিস্তৃতি বা
গভীরতা লাভ করিয়াই স্থির হইয়া যায় নাই। এ সাহিত্য নদীর
আকারে বহিয়া চলিয়াছে, এবং পথের প্রকৃতি অনুসারে দিকে
দিকে প্রবাহিত ও নানা চন্দ্রের তিলোল-কল্লোলে মুগ্ধিত হইয়াছে।
এই সাহিত্যেই বাঙ্গালীর অভিনবতম চিত্র প্রকর্ষের আদর্শ
প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে—এই এক কবি মনীষীর দ্বারা আমাদের
সাধনার জগৎ ও নিজ সমাজ, অতীত ও বর্তমান যুগ ও মানব
যোগ রক্ষিত হইয়াছে। গল্প, নাটক, কবিতা, উপন্যাস
রচনার যেনন তাঁহার অসাধারণ কৃতিত্ব দেখিতে পাই, তেমনি
জাতির চৈতন্যমূলে এক সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ভাব-দৃষ্টির সাক্ষাৎ,
সর্বকাল ও সর্বজাতির মধ্যে নিছ জাতিকে স্বাপন
করিয়া তাহার শক্তি ও অশক্তি, তাহার সৌভাগ্য ও দুর্ভাগ্য
গণনা; এবং তাহা হইতেই তাহার মুক্তিপথ নির্দেশ; এবং
সর্বশেষে, যে ভাষা জাতির আত্মপরিচয় ও আত্মরক্ষা, আত্মবিকাশ
ও আত্মপ্রকাশের একমাত্র সাধন, সে ভাষার অক্ষর গুলিতেই
যেন মন্ত্রশক্তির সঞ্চার।—এ সকল কার্য পঞ্চাশ বৎসরের মধ্যে
কিংবা তারও উর্দ্ধকালের মধ্যে আর কোন সাহিত্যিকের
দ্বারা এমন ভাবে সাধিত হয় নাই। সেই স্বর্গত বুদ্ধ জরাজীর্ণ
প্রকৃষি বাংলা সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে একমাত্র স্রোত ও যুগো কবিরূপে
বিরাজ করিয়াছিলেন।*

বালাকাল হইতেই কবির জীবনে কবিরূপ দেখা দিয়াছিল,
বাণীর বাণায়সে বাক্য হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল কবির কণ্ঠে

স্বর লছরী। তিনি নিজে লিখিয়াছেন—‘শিক্ষাবল্লে তাঁহার কেনল নহে পড়ে ‘জল পড়ে পা ত্রা নড়ে’—তখন বর খল প্রভৃতি বাগানের তুলনায় কানিয়ায় যবে মাত্র কল পাওয়াছি, সেদিন পড়িতেছি, ‘জল পড়ে, পা ত্রা নড়ে’ আবার জীবনের এইটাই যদি কবির প্রথম কবিতা—সেই অতি শৈশব হইতে আশি বৎসর পর্য্যন্ত, নৃত্য, দ্রুত তাঁহার পাশে আসিয়া দেখা দেওয়ার পূর্ববর্তন পর্য্যন্ত, পূর্ণ মনন বৎসর কাল পর্য্যন্ত, কবিতাটুকু তিনি নিরলসে মাথিত্য সাধনা। জীবনের একটি মুহূর্ত্তও তিনি ছাড়াই অদেহলাস বা অস্ত্রম বিবাহে সময় ফেরা করেন নাই। বাঙ্গালী সাহিত্যের স্বর্নদীপিকা উদ্ভূতি সাধনই ছিল তাঁর জীবনের মূল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্ত বন্দনে বিকশিত পানিভাতি পুষ্পের মত ফুলিয়া উঠিয়াছিল কবিতার নির্ঝর বারি। তাঁহার জীবনে অভাব সিন্ধু ভাবে আগিয়াছিল স্বদেশপ্ৰীতি, বাঙ্গালী জাতির প্ৰীতি, ভাবিত বারিগর প্ৰীতি, মেহ, প্রেম ও ভালবাসা। প্রথমে কবিতা পাই কবির কবিতা—

“পূর্ণিমা জুড়িয়া বাজিতে নিয়াম
হৃদিত্তে পেরেছি ওই
সবাই আগিছে লইয়া নিশান
কইলে বাঙ্গালী কই!”

তরপর বাঙ্গালী ভাষার প্ৰতি শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন করিয়া এই দৃঢ়পন উক্তি করিয়াছিলেন,

“অপতের নানো টাঁই নাই বলে
কাদিতেছে বঙ্গভূমি
গান গেয়ে কবি অপতের তলে
টাঁই করে দাও তুমি।”

তাঁহার এই কামনা সার্বিক ও জয়যুক্ত করিয়া থিয়াছেন তাঁহার জীবনে বিশ্ব অপতের বিশ্ব কবি।

হিন্দু মেলার সৃষ্টি হয় বাবা ১২৭৩ সালের চৈত্র সংক্রান্তিতে, ১৮৬৭ সালের এপ্রিল মাসে। স্বদেশ ও স্বজাতির কল্যাণই ছিল হিন্দু মেলার উদ্দেশ্য। ভারতবর্ষের ও বাঙ্গালী দেশের শিক্ষা ও স্বদেশপ্ৰীতি প্রেরণা অস্তরে অস্তরে উদ্ভূত, জাগ্রত ও মনপ্রাণ উৎফুল্ল করিবার জন্যই হইয়াছিল তাঁহার উদ্ভব। স্বপীয় মহাত্মা রাজনারায়ণ বসু মহাশয় ১২৩৩ সালের ২৩শে ভাদ্র, ইংরেজী ১৮২৬ সালের ৭ই সেপ্টেম্বর, কলিকাতার দক্ষিণে বোড়াল গ্রামে জন্ম গ্রহণ করেন। রাজনারায়ণ ছিলেন হিন্দু কলেজের শেষ পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ কৃতী ছাত্র। রাজনারায়ণ বাবু ইংরেজীতে রূপান্তরিত ছিলেন। প্রথমে তিনি বাংলা লিখিতেন না—যটিনা-ক্রমে তিনি একদিন একটি বাঙ্গালী প্রবন্ধ লিখিয়া শ্রীমুক্তদেবেন্দ্র নাথ ঠাকুরকে দিয়া আসেন, মহর্ষি উক্ত প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করিয়া অত্যন্ত প্ৰীতি লাভ করেন এবং প্রশংসা করেন। ইহাতে অনুপ্রাণিত হইয়া রাজনারায়ণ বাবু বাঙ্গালী ভাষা ও সাহিত্যের উদ্ভূতির জন্য অনেক কিছু করিয়াছিলেন। স্বদেশপ্রেম ও জাতীয়ভাব তাঁহার অস্থি মজ্জাপ্রতি হইয়াছিল। হেমচন্দ্রের ‘ভারত মণ্ডিত’, সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ‘মিলে সব ভারত মন্ডান’ এবং গোবিন্দ চন্দ্র রায়ের ‘নিখিলসমিলে বহিছ যদা’ ইত্যাদি কবিতা ও মণ্ডিত ছিল

তাঁহার অতি প্রিয়, হৃদয়ের গভীর আবেগের সহিত আবৃত্তি করিতেন। বৃদ্ধাবস্থাতেও তিনি জাতীয়ভাব ও স্বদেশানুরাগে পূর্ণ থাকিতেন। যে সময় লাহোরে কাংথায় হইতেছিল তখন একদিন তাঁহার দোহিঙ্গী গান করিতেছিলেন,

‘পর দীপমালা নগরে নগরে,
তুমি যে তিমিরে, তুমি যে তিমিরে।’

রাজনারায়ণ বাবু উহা শুনিয়া বলিলেন, ‘ও গান গায়নে গায়নে—যব কথা মনে হয়, শরীর দিয়ে আগুন বাধির হয়—মন উদ্ভাসিত হইয়া যায়। গায়নে, গায়নে।’

এই রাজনারায়ণ বাবু ১২৭৩ সালের প্রথম দিকে শিক্ষিত বঙ্গবাসীগণের মধ্যে জাতীয় গৌরবোজ্জ্বল সঙ্গঠিনী সভা স্থাপনের এক প্রস্তাব ইংরেজী ভাষায় প্রকাশ করেন। সেই প্রস্তাব হইতে হিন্দু মেলার উৎপত্তি। এই বৎসরের চৈত্র সংক্রান্তিতে ১৮৬৭, ১৭ই এপ্রিল হিন্দু মেলার প্রথম অধিবেশন হয়। গণেন্দ্র নাথ ঠাকুর এই মেলার সম্পাদক হইলেন। মেলার অধ্যক্ষগণ স্বদেশীয় শিল্পের উদ্ভূতি, সাহিত্যের বিকাশ, মণ্ডিতাদির চাফা, স্বদেশীয় কৃষ্টি, প্রভৃতি পুনর্বিকাশে উৎসাহদান করিবার জন্য প্রতিকার হইলেন। এই স্বদেশীয়ভাব প্রচারের জন্য দেবেন্দ্রনাথের অর্থ সাহায্যে নবগোপাল মিত্র ‘নাশনাল পেপার’ নামক একখানি ইংরেজি সাপ্তাহিক প্রকাশ করেন।

যেদিন প্ৰাতিপুকের বাগানে মহাসমারোহে মেলার দ্বিতীয় অধিবেশন হয় সেই দিন সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ‘গাও ভারতের জয়’ গানটি স্বেচ্ছায়কন্দিগের দ্বারা গীত হয়। হিন্দু মেলার প্রাতিষ্ঠাকালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছিলেন চ’বছর বয়সের বালক মাত্র। এই বুধের স্বদেশিকতা বদ্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সত্তর বৎসর বয়সে লিখিয়াছিলেন, “দেশ প্ৰীতির উন্মাদনা তখন দেশে কোথাও নেই। রঙ্গলালের ‘স্বাধীনতা হীনতায় কে বাঁচিতে চায় রে, কে বাঁচিতে চায়!’ আর তার পরে হেমচন্দ্রের ‘বিশ্বিতি কোটি মানবের বাথ’ কবিতায় দেশমুক্তিকামনার ‘স্বর ভোরের পাখীর কাকলির মত শোনা যায়। হিন্দু মেলার --- গান ছিল মেজদাদার লেখা—‘জয় ভারতের জয়’, গণদাদার লেখা ‘লজ্জায় ভারতযশ প্রাচিব কি করে’, বড়দাদার ‘মলিন মুখ চন্দ্রমা ভারত তোমারি’।”

‘হিন্দু মেলা স্থাপনের প্রায় আট বৎসর পরে ১২৮১ সালে বালক রবীন্দ্রনাথও একদিন হিন্দু মেলার জন্য এক কবিতা লিখিলেন। কবিতাটির নাম ‘হিন্দু মেলার উপহার’। কবিতাটি তৎকালীন দ্বিভাষিক অমৃতবাজার পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হয়। --- পাঠকবর্গের কোতুহলের জন্য কয়েকটি পংক্তি তুলিয়া দিলাম।

“ছিমাত্র শিখরে শিলাসনোপরি
গান বাস মাখি বীণা হাতে করি
কাঁপারে পর্বত শিখর কানন
কাঁপারে নীহার শীতলার।

ঝঙ্কারিয়া বীণা কবির গায়,
কেন রে ভারত কেন তুই হয়,
আবার হাসি! হাসিবার দিন
আছে কি, এ ঘটনা এ ঘোর দুঃখে?”

এই কবিতার কথা রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহার জীবনস্মৃতিতে কিছু বলেন নাই, তবে উহার দুই বৎসর পরে হিন্দু মেলায় তিনি কবিতাটি পাঠ করিয়াছিলেন।*

ঠাকুর পরিবারের ইতিহাসে স্বাদেশিকতা কি ভাবে উদ্ভাবিত এবং প্রকাশিত হইতে থাকে এবং সঙ্গিত রূপ বারণ করে তাহা জ্যোতির্বিদ্র নাথ ঠাকুরের আত্মজীবনীতে বিস্তৃতরূপে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে।

ধীরে ধীরে কবির জীবন নব নব রূপ গ্রাহ্যে, বর্ষায়, বর্ষান্তে, শরতে, হেমন্তে বাস্তব শ্রোতাধারা চলছিল কলোচিত—
তরঙ্গিত হয়ে—দিকে দিকে শ্রাবণের উচ্ছ্বাসে জীবন্তরূপে, তখন বাঙ্গালীর চরিত্র, বাঙ্গালীর অলস উদাস। দেখিয়া কবির চিত্ত উদ্বেলিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল, বিকল জাগিয়াছিল তাঁহার প্রাণে।
তখন রক্তকণ্ঠে পাঠিয়াছিলেন—

‘ইহার চেয়ে হইত যদি আরব বেদুয়িন
চরণ তলে বিশাল মরু দিগন্তে বিলীন—
ছুটেছে ঘোড়া, উড়েছে বালি,
জীবন স্রোত আকাশে তালি
হৃদয় তলে বহ্নিকালি চলেছি নিশিদিন,
বরশা হাতে ভরসা প্রাণে সদাচি নিকরেশ—
মরুত বাড় যেমন বহে সকল বাধাহীন।
বিপদ মাঝে ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়ি শোণিত উঠে ফুটে,
সবল দেহে সবল মনে জীবন জেগে উঠে,
অন্ধকারে সূর্যালোকে সত্তরিয়া মৃত্যু স্রোতে
নতুনায় চিত্ত হতে বত হাসি টুটে।
বিশ্ব মাঝে মহান যাত্রা, সঙ্গী পরাণের,
বন্যা মাঝে যায় যে প্রাণ গিলু মাঝে লুটে।

নিমেষে তরে ইচ্ছা করে বিকট উল্লাসে
সকল টুটে বাইতে ছুটে জীবন উচ্ছ্বাসে।

শূন্য বোম অপরিসাণ মদ্যসম করিতে পান,
মুক্ত করি রক্ত প্রাণ, উদ্ধে নীলাকাশে।
খাকিতে নারি ক্ষুদ্র কোণে আশ্রয় চায়ে
গুপ্ত হয়ে লুপ্ত হয়ে গুপ্ত গৃহবাসে।’

এই কবিতার মধ্যে পাই কবির হৃদয় সমুদ্রে তীব্রতম দোলা।
অলস জীবনে বাঁচিয়া থাকায় কি লাভ! কি লাভ বহরে ছোট
মাথায় বড় বাঙ্গালী সন্তানের জীবন যাপনের! এই জীবন কি
—জীবন! উদার উৎসাহে বিপদের মাঝে ঝাঁপিয়া পড়িয়া
অন্ধকারে বা সূর্যালোকে সবলদেহে সবলমনে জীবনকে
উদার জাপ্রত এবং নির্ভীক ভাবে সাহসিকতার সঙ্গে বিশ্বমাঝে
মহান যাত্রা তাহারই অনস্বাদনে অগ্রসর হইয়া—শূন্যবোম অপরিসাণ
মদ্য সম প্রাণ ভরিয়া পান করিয়া প্রাণকে দীনতার মধ্যে
ক্ষুদ্রতার মধ্যে নির্জীব অলস দুর্বলরূপে কারাবন্দী না হইয়া চাই
উদ্ধে-অনন্ত নীলাকাশে অনন্তের সন্ধানে অগ্রসর হইতে—‘কিসের
এ জীবন, ক’দিনের প্রাণ, কেমন করিয়া ক্ষুদ্র গৃহকোণে

আয়াকুত্তবনে মৃত হয়ে লুপ্ত হয়ে থাকিতে। যে কি জীবন।
যে কি প্রাণ! আমাদের মানুষ হইতে দেও! চির লুপ্ত করে
আর ধরে রেখো না।

‘প্রাণ দিয়ে, দুঃখ সয়ে, আপনার হাতে
সংগ্রাম করিতে দাও ভাল মদ মাখে।
শীর্ণ শাস্ত্র সাধু তব পুত্রদের ধরে।
দাও সবে গৃহ ছীন লক্ষ্মী ছাড়া করে।
সাতকোটি সন্তানেরে, যে মুক্ত জননী,
রেখেছে বাঙ্গালি করে, মানুষ করনি।’

এই যে স্বদেশ প্রীতি ও বাঙ্গালী জাতিকে মানুষ হইবার আশ্রয়
তাহা এই সমুদয় কবিতায় ব্যক্ত হইয়াছিল। ১৮৬১ সাল হইতে
১৮৯৯ সাল এই যে ৩৮-৪০ বৎসর বয়স পর্যন্ত তাঁহার কাব্য ও
গান যে স্তরে চলিয়াছিল তাহার মধ্যে দেখা দিল এক নতুন
আদর্শ ও প্রেরণা। কবি বলিয়াছিলেন ‘যৌবনতরী বিদায় দিবে
চল্লিশের পারে’ আরম্ভ হইতে তাঁর নতুন কর্মময় জীবন।
রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবনবেদে যাঁহারা মনোযোগ দিয়া পাঠ করিয়াছেন
কাব্যের ও গানের প্রবন্ধের ও শাস্ত্রের প্রাণকেন্দ্রের মধ্যে অর্ন্তদৃষ্টি
নিষ্কম্প করিয়াছেন—তাঁহারা অবশ্যই এই সত্য উপলব্ধি করি-
য়াছেন যে তিনি শৈশবকাল হইতেই চাহিয়া ছিলেন—যে এশিয়ার
বিভিন্ন জাতি, ভারতের বিভিন্ন জাতির মধ্যে একটা বৃহৎ একটা
বোম জাগিয়া উঠে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের বৃদ্ধচর্যাশ্রম প্রতিষ্ঠা হইল।
তাঁহার আদর্শ কি ছিল। তিনি প্রাচীন তপোবনের আদর্শে
সঙ্গ করেন শাস্ত্রনিকেতনের বৃদ্ধচর্যাশ্রম। এই আশ্রম প্রতিষ্ঠার
মূলে ছিলেন বৃদ্ধবান্ধব উপাধায়। এই উপাধায় মহাশয়কে
দেখিবার এবং পরিচিত হইবার সৌভাগ্য আমার হইয়াছিল।
কতদিন সন্ধ্যায়, কতদিন সভাবাসিতে তাঁহার সমুদ্র তেজোগর্ভ
বক্তৃতা শুনিয়াছি। বৃদ্ধবান্ধবের সহস্র আমরা জানিতে পারি যে
—শাস্ত্রনিকেতনে বৃদ্ধচর্যাশ্রম স্থাপনে তিনি রবীন্দ্রনাথের
প্রধান সহায় ছিলেন। বৃদ্ধবান্ধবের আগল নাম ছিল ভবানীচরণ
বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। ইনি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের সমবয়সী। তাঁহার
জন্মকাল ১৮৬১ সাল। কেশবচন্দ্র যখন ব্রাহ্মদর্শ প্রচার করিতে-
ছিলেন, তখন উনি ব্রাহ্মসমাজে যোগদান করেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের
মৃত্যুর পর ৮ই জুন, ১৮৮৪, তিনি বাঁচি বৎসর বয়সে ব্রাহ্মদর্শ
প্রচার করিতে গিকুদেশে যান ও সেখানে খৃষ্টান পাদরীদের প্রভাবে
পড়িয়া খৃষ্টদর্শ গ্রহণ করেন। ইহার পুস্তক বিখ্যাত খৃষ্টান
পাদরী কালীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ রচিত মল-বর্মের
গানটি উদ্ধৃত করিলাম,

‘যে জীবন ছিল তব তপোবনে,
যে জীবন ছিল তব রাজ্যমনে
মুক্ত দীপ্ত যে মহাজীবন
চিত্ত ভরিয়া লব!
মৃত্যুহরণ শঙ্কাহরণ
দাও যে মন্ত্র তব!’

* প্রবাসী—১৩৩৮। এডুকেশন গেজেট ১২৭৭ সাল। রবীন্দ্রজীবনী-প্রভাত কৃষাণ মুখোপাধ্যায় ৪৬-৪৮ পৃষ্ঠা, প্রদীপ ১৩০৬ জুলাই। বঙ্গের জাতীয়
কবিতা ও সঙ্গীত—যোগেন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্ত ও সাংগাহিক ‘দেশ’ জুলাই।

এই যুদ্ধবান্ধব পরবর্তী জীবনে ছিলেন 'সন্ধ্যা' নামক দৈনিক পত্রের সম্পাদক।* যে সময়কার 'সন্ধ্যা' ছিল আমাদের নিত্য পাঠ্য সাপাদ পত্র—যে যুগের কথা সেকালের বাঙ্গালী মাত্রেইই বর্ণিত।

লর্ড কার্জন যখন ভারতের বড়লাকি হইয়া আসিলেন, তখন দেখা দিল বাঙ্গলা দেশে এক নবযুগ। বঙ্গের অঙ্গচ্ছেদ আবৃত্ত হইল। তাহাতে যারা বাঙ্গলার যারা ভাবতবর্ষে বিদ্যোভ, যে সময়ে করি মামিলেন স্বদেশী যুগের আন্দোলনের মধ্যে বাপাইয়া। রচিত হইল স্বদেশী গান, বাহির হইলেন পথে পথে ভিক্ষার ঝুপি লইয়া, ভিক্ষার জন্য দেশের ঘেবার জন্য।

তাহার পরিশীলনে বঙ্গীয় প্রাদেশিক সংশ্লেষনের ব্যবস্থা হইয়াছিল, আর সেই সময়েই সাহিত্য সংশ্লেষনের ব্যবস্থা হয় এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ মনোনিবেশ হইয়াছিলেন সভাপতি। এসময়ে আমাদের একটি বক্তব্য আছে। আমি তখন বিক্রমপুরে, আমাদের বাস মূলচর হইতে যাত্রা করি নরেকজন তরুণ বন্ধু সহ, চাঁদপুর হইতে, কলিকাতা হইতে বরিশালগামী গিমনারে। আমাদের পরম সৌভাগ্য সেই গিমনারে কলিকাতার নেতৃবৃন্দ সকলে বরিশাল যাইতেছিলেন, যন যন তুমুল বন্দে মাতরম্ স্ববির মধ্যে চলিতেছিল গিমনারখানি, পথে প্রচণ্ডমান্য অনেক যাত্রী জাহাজে উঠিলেন, সেই গিমনারে ছিলেন দেশবন্ধু চিত্তরঞ্জন, বিজয় চ্যাটার্জি (বারএলি), যোগেশচন্দ্র চৌধুরী ও অন্যান্য খ্যাতিমান ব্যক্তি। যে আনন্দ কোলাহল, প্রীতি ও গানের মধ্যে 'বন্দে মাতরম্' সঙ্গীতের মধ্য দিয়া পরস্পর মিলিত ভাবে যে প্রীতি প্রফুল্লমনে এই জাতীয় মিলন যত্নের অনঙ্গানে যোগ দিতে আসিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু গিমনার তাঁরে না ভিড়িয়া একটি দূরে রহিল, গিমনার হইতে যন যন 'বন্দে মাতরম্' স্বনি হইতেছিল, কিন্তু তাঁর হইতে তাহার কোন গাভা পাওয়া গেল না।

অশ্রুনাশানু প্রভৃতি কয়েকজন নেতা আসিয়া জানাইলেন, আমাদের গিমনার হইতে কোন 'বন্দে মাতরম্' স্বনি হইতে পারিলে না। ১৩১৩ সালের ১লা বৈশাখ জাতীয় ইতিহাসের একটি সম্বন্ধীয় দিন হইয়া রহিয়াছে। মনে পড়ে স্বচক্ষে দেখিয়াছিলাম মনোবন্ধন ও তাঁর পুত্র চিত্তরঞ্জনের সাথে মৃত প্রায় অবস্থায় মাতৃনাম 'বন্দে মাতরম্' দেখিয়াছিলাম সেকালের নেতৃবৃন্দের ডিপ্লিক পুলিশ সুপারিন্টেন্ডেন্ট কর্তৃক স্বরেন্দ্রনাথের মৃত অবস্থা। জরিমানা ও অপদম্ব করিলেন মাজিষ্ট্রেট এমারসন সাহেব। আমাদের চক্ষের সম্মুখে দেখিয়াছি পুলিশ সুপারিন্টেন্ডেন্ট কেন্স সাহেবের হুকুমে পুলিশের লাঠি চালায়! বিপিন পাল সাংসিকতার সহিত পুলিশ সাহেবের ঘোড়ার লাগাম ধরিলেন—কম্পিত করে, গাহিয়াছিলেন:

ওদের বাঁধন যতই শক্ত হবে,
ততই মোদের বাঁধন টুটবে!
ওদের আঁশি যত রক্ত হবে,
মোদের আঁশি প্লাববে!
ওরে ভরসা ডাউসানে কড়,
ছেলে আড়েনে জগৎ প্রভু....

* আমরা সৌভাগ্যবশত উপাধায় বন্ধুবান্ধবকে দেখিয়াছি। আমি তখন নিজ বাসভূমি বিক্রমপুরে ছিলাম। 'সন্ধ্যা' পত্রিকায় নিয়মিত ভাবে সংবাদ পাঠাইতাম। আমার বন্ধু হটকোটের উকিল শ্রীযুক্ত সারদাচরণ সেন ছিলেন সন্ধ্যার অন্যতম সহ-সম্পাদক। আমার কাছে 'সন্ধ্যা' 'স্বপ্নান্তর' প্রভৃতির ফাইল ছিল। যে সময়ে আমরা 'পথিক' নামে একখানা সাপিক পত্র সম্পাদন করি। সারদাবাবু তাহাতেও সাহায্যকারী ছিলেন। তাহার 'বন্দে মাতরম্' ছিল শিবোত্তম। বঙ্গীয় সাহিত্য-পরিষদে তাহার কোন কোন সংখ্যা পাঠ্য সম্ভব।

রাজার দেউড়ী হইতে আমরা বাহির হইয়াছিলাম 'বন্দে মাতরম্' গান গাহিতে গাহিতে। লাঠি চলিতেছে, ঘোড়া চুনিচুনি করিতেছে, তবু চলিয়াছিল প্রাদেশিক সমিতির সদস্যগণ! সেদিন যে সভাপতিওপে আহত পুত্রসহ মনোরঞ্জনবাবুকে, স্বরেন্দ্রনাথের বক্তৃতিদোষ, কৃষ্ণকুমার মিত্রের দ্বন্দ্বতা, রূপ বিনোদনের অচল আঁল ভাবে শেষবারে আমাদের মাজিষ্ট্রেটের হুকুমে সভাপতি, সেদৃশ্য, যে কাহিনী আমরা চক্ষে ঘাঘা প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়াছি এখানে তাহা সবিশেষ বর্ণনা সম্ভব নহে। ১৯০৬ সালে এই প্রাদেশিক সমিতির অধিবেশন হইয়াছিল। বরিশালের স্বনামধন্য নেতা অশ্রুনাশ কুমারের আদ্যানে। সভাপতি হইয়াছিলেন আবদুল রহুল, কলিকাতার একজন খ্যাতনামা ব্যাবসায়ী। তাহার পত্নী একজন উরেক মহিলা ও সভাস্থলে নেতাদের পাশে উপবিষ্ট ছিলেন। এই বঙ্গীয় প্রাদেশিক সমিতির অধিবেশনের ব্যবহার যত্নে যত্নে সে সময়ে সেই যত্নে সাহিত্য সংশ্লেষনের আয়োজন করেন বরিশাল লাপুগিয়ার জমিদার কবি দেবকুমার রায় চৌধুরী। প্রিয় দর্শন, বিনোদ্যসারী আমাদের যে সময়কার প্রিয়তম বন্ধু দেবকুমার। এই সাহিত্য সংশ্লেষনের সভাপতি হইয়াছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ।

বরিশাল প্রাদেশিক সমিতির শৌচনীয় পরিণাম—পুলিশের জুলুম। স্বরেন্দ্রনাথের বন্দী এবং মাজিষ্ট্রেটের কাছে মতি হইয়া অপমান ও জরিমানা, আকিসার্কুলার সোসাইটির ছাত্রগণের প্রতি পুলিশের নির্যাতন, সেদিন ছিল ১৩১৩ সালের ১লা বৈশাখ। সেদিনই রেগুলেশন লাঠির আঘাতে স্বদেশীয়েরা প্রথম হইল নির্যাতিত—লাঠি দ্বারা প্রহৃত। এই ১৩১৩ সালের ১লা বৈশাখে জাতীয় জীবনের—জাতীয় ইতিহাসের একটি—আমরা দেখিয়াছি স্বকর্ণে শুনিয়াছি চিত্তরঞ্জনের আহত ও মৃতপ্রায় অবস্থায় ও মাতৃনাম 'বন্দে মাতরম্' উচ্চারণ, দেখিয়াছি বৃজেন্দ্রনাথের রক্ত, শুনিয়াছি জন সাধারণের হিন্দু মুসলমান চাষী সাধারণের মুখে—'ঐ স্বরেন্দ্র রাজা দেখু।' আমাদের সৌভাগ্য হইয়াছিল 'কৃষ্ণকুমার' কাব্যবিশারদ, বিপিন পাল, মতিলাল, ভূপেন্দ্রনাথ, যোগেশ দত্ত, অশ্রুনাশ কুমার প্রভৃতি বঙ্গের মনস্বী দেশপ্রেমিক সন্তানগণের অপূর্ব বাকবদ্য, অপূর্ব দ্বন্দ্বতা, এটিসার্কুলার সোসাইটির অন্যতম নেতা শচীন্দ্র প্রসাদ বসুর বক্তৃকণের বক্তৃতা একাও যেন কানে শুনিতেছি। আর দেখিয়াছি প্রতিনিধিগণের সংঘত এবং নেতৃবৃন্দের আদেশ মানিয়া চলা। আর দেখিয়াছি বীর গভীর ভাবে অবিচলিতভাবে উপবিষ্ট চিত্তরঞ্জনের ধ্যান গভীর ভাব। অনেকই বরিশাল প্রাদেশিক সমিতির বিবরণ পাঠ করিয়াছেন কাজেই অতৃপ্তি নিশ্চয়োজন।

আমরা দেবকুমার বাবুর নিকটে জানিলাম, রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেই দিন সেই যজ্ঞভঙ্গের দিন বরিশালে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। তিনি তাহার বক্তব্য অবস্থান করিতেছিলেন। যখন ভীষণভাবে বক্তৃতা হইয়া গেল তখন বরিশালের নেতারা সাহিত্য সংশ্লেষনের নিকটীচি সভাপতি রবীন্দ্রনাথের সহিত কি করা কর্তব্য তাহা আলোচনার জন্য তাহার সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিতে যেখানে গেলেন। দেবকুমার বাবুর প্রীতি ও স্নেহের গুণে আমার নায় তরুণ যুবকও বোটে গিয়াছিলাম। নানাবিধ তর্ক বিতর্কের পর রবীন্দ্রনাথ বীর গভীর করে ধীরে ধীরে বলিয়াছিলেন—দেখুন

এমন একটা দক্ষযজ্ঞের পর এই ক্ষেত্রে সাহিত্য সংমেলন হওয়া ঠিক হবে না। যেটা হবে সব দিক থেকেই একটা লাঞ্ছনার ব্যাপার। আমি বুঝতে পাচ্ছি না কেমন করে যাবেন আপনারা ম্যাগিষ্ট্রেট এমার্সনকে বলতে যে সভা করতে অনুমতি দিন! এই অনুমতি ভিক্ষা করা হবে আমাদের সকলের সর্বাপেক্ষা অপমানকর! নিজেদের মর্যাদা হবে ক্ষুণ্ণ। অশ্বিনী বাবু, দেবকুমার বাবু ও আরও দু'চারজন বিশিষ্ট বিদ্বান ও বুদ্ধিমান দ্বারা সাহিত্য সংমেলনের আয়োজনকারী—দেবকুমার বাবু ও অন্যান্য মেতৃবৃন্দেব সাহিত্য, ম্যাগিষ্ট্রেটের অনুগ্রহ ভিক্ষা করে সাহিত্য সংমেলন করা আশ্রমমর্যাদার হানিকর বলিয়া স্বীকার করিলেন। কবি বীরে নীরবে কলিকাতায় ফিরিয়া গেলেন। তাঁহার সেই সোমশাস্ত্র গভীর মূর্তি—আয়োজ্যকুল তীক্ষ্ণদৃষ্টি, এবং তাঁহার সামান্য বস্ত্রবাটুকু বর্শীর ভরের মত কানে বাজিয়াছিল। তিনি বেশী কথা বলেন না, অনেকে সংমেলন হইবার পক্ষে ও বিপক্ষে বলিয়াছিলেন। সেখানে শিক্ষানুষ্ঠান, ও অধ্যাপকও ছিলেন, ব্যবহারভাবীও ছিলেন। কিন্তু কবি এমন সূক্ষ্ম ভাবে শেষ কথাটি বলিলেন যে সব চেয়ে অমর্যাদাকর হবে এমার্সন সাহেবের কাছে অনুমতি চাওয়া। যে গভীর বেদনা আমাদের প্রত্যেকের অন্তরে জেগে রয়েছে তার পর কি আর সভা-সংমেলন হতে পারে—সে যে অসম্ভব। আমার শুধু একটি কথা—না—এ হতে পারে না। সভায় সকলে নীরব রহিলেন।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বরিশাল সাহিত্য সংমেলনের ভাষণও প্রস্তুত করিয়াছিলেন, শুনিয়াছিলেন দেবকুমার বাবুর কাছে।

১৯০৬ সালের ডিসেম্বর মাসে কলিকাতায় কংগ্রেস-এর যে প্রদর্শনী হয় তাহাতে সভাপতি হইয়াছিলেন দাদাভাই নৌরোজী। তাঁহার বক্তৃতায় তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন “স্বরাজ আমাদের জন্মগত অধিকার।” ভবানীপুরে যে সময়ে নবগঠিত প্রদর্শনী আন্দোলনকে মিথিল ভারত বিষয়ে দেখিতেছিল। ভবানীপুর শিল্প প্রদর্শনী হইল; এই প্রদর্শনীর সহিত একটি সাহিত্য সংমেলন হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এ সভায় বক্তৃতা করেন। তিনি বলিলেন “গত বৎসর চৈত্র মাসে বরিশালে সাহিত্য সংমেলন সভা আয়োজন করিয়াছিল।...বরিশালের যজ্ঞ কর্তারা আমাকে সংমেলনের সভাপতি পদে আহ্বান করিয়াছিলেন।...আমি যে প্রথম সাহিত্য-সভার সভাপতি পদে বৃত্তি হইয়াছিলাম সে সম্মান আমার পক্ষে শিরোধারী। (বঙ্গ দর্শন, ১৩০৮ পৃঃ ৫১৮)

বাংলা দেশে তখন বঙ্গ বিভাগের বিরুদ্ধে যোবর্ত্তার আন্দোলন চলিতেছে। তখন ঢাকা, চট্টগ্রাম, রাজশাহী ও আসাম বিভাগ লইয়া হইল পূর্ববঙ্গ ও আসাম। লাটি হইলেন সার বামফিল্ড কুলার। ঢাকা হইল রাজশাহী। প্রেসিডেন্সি ও বর্দ্ধমান বিভাগ, বিহার, ছোটনাগপুর, উড়িষ্যা লইয়া হইল বঙ্গদেশ। বঙ্গ বিভাগের পূর্বে বিহার, উড়িষ্যা ও বঙ্গদেশ এক ছোটলাটের শাসনাধীন ছিল। এখন দুইজন ছোটলাট নিযুক্ত হইলেন এবং নূতন ভাবে শাসন সংক্রান্ত, শিক্ষা ও সংস্কার সংক্রান্ত প্রত্যেক বিষয়ে বিভক্ত হইল। বাঙ্গালী এই বঙ্গবিভাগকে কিভাবে গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন তাহা সকলেরই সুবিজ্ঞাত।

স্বদেশী যুগে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কেন যোগ দিলেন তাহার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণটুকু দিতে হইতেছে। ১৮৯৯ সালের জানুয়ারী মাসে

লর্ড কার্জন ভারতের বড় লাটি হইয়া আসেন। তিনি আসিয়া নানাদিকে আরত্ব করিলেন সংস্কার। তিনি সম্মতি সপ্তম এডওয়ার্ডের দিল্লীতে অভিযোজনের ব্যাপারে প্রচুর ব্যয় করেন—যাকে বলে রাজস্ব যজ্ঞ। তারপর বঙ্গ বিভাগ হইতে হইল একঅশান্তি ও বিপ্লবের অভ্যুদয়। সেকথা আগে বলিয়াছি।

বাঙ্গালী এই বঙ্গ বিভাগকে অস্তরের সহিত গ্রহণ করেন নাই। সারা দেশব্যাপী গভীর আন্দোলন চলে, সভা, বিদর্শনী দ্রব্য বর্জন, স্বদেশী সঙ্গীত,—হইতে থাকে প্রচারিত।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই বিভাগকে চিরস্মরণীয় করিবার জন্য একটি আবেদন প্রচার করেন। তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন “আগামী ৩০শে আশ্বিন (১৩১২) নালা দেশ আইনের দ্বারা বিভক্ত হইবে। কিন্তু ঐশ্বর্যে বাঙ্গালীকে বিভক্ত করেন নাই তাহাই তাহার বিশেষ রূপে সমর্থ ও প্রচার করিবার জন্য সেই দিনকে আমরা বাঙ্গালীর রাগিবন্ধনের দিন করিয়া, পরস্পরের হাতে হরিজা বর্মের মূর্ত্তা বাধিয়া দিব। রাগিবন্ধনের মন্ত্রটি এই—‘ভাই ভাই এক হই।’”

সে সময়ে তিনি রচনা করেন রাগি-সঙ্গীত। এই দাবী সঙ্গীত সারা বাঙ্গালা দেশে চড়াইয়া পড়িয়াছিল। সকলের কাছে কাছে গীত হইতঃ

‘বাংলার মাটি বাংলার জল

বাংলার বাবু বাংলার ফল

পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক, হে ভগবান।’

এই সঙ্গীত বাঙ্গালীর প্রাণে নূতন শক্তি জাগাইয়া দিয়াছিল, দেশকে নিবিড়তম ঘনিষ্ঠতম ভাবে, দেশজ্ঞানী শ্যামলা বঙ্গভূমিকে ভালবাসিতে শিক্ষাইয়াছিল।

সে দিবাতে এক শুভদিন, পুণ্যমুহূর্ত্ত, যেদিন রবীন্দ্রনাথ নতুন পদে ‘বন্দে মাতরম’ সঙ্গদলের সহিত গঙ্গাস্নানে গিয়াছিলেন। সেকালের বঙ্গ সঙ্কান্ত পুরুষ ও মহিলা সেই শোভাযাত্রায় যোগ দিয়াছিলেন। সেই দিন সেই গঙ্গাতীরে, কলনাদিনী জাহ্নবীর তীরে তিনি সকলের সহিত বাংলার সর্বপ্রকার ভেদবুদ্ধি ভুলিয়া ইকামত্রে দীক্ষিত হইবার জন্য প্রার্থনা করেন—

‘বাংলার মাটি বাংলার জল

পুণ্য হউক, পুণ্য হউক হে ভগবান।’

সেদিনই অপরাহ্নে রোগপীড়িত আনন্দমোহন বাবু আপনার সার্কুলার রোডের ময়দানে ফেডারেশন হলের ভিত্তি স্থাপন করেন। সেদিনকার সে অগাধ্য জনপ্রবাহ—সেই সহস্র সহস্র লোকের ভীড়ে নীরবে মৃত্যু শয্যায় পাড়িত অবসর নেন ও দেখে, তাঁহার অভিভাষণ পাঠিত হইল। ইংরাজীতে লিখিত তাঁহার অভিভাষণ পাঠ করিয়াছিলেন আশুতোষ চৌধুরী আর বাংলায় পাঠ করেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ, উদাত্ত স্তম্ভুর কণ্ঠে। তারপর দলে দলে মিলিত হইয়া গিয়াছিলেন শোভাযাত্রা করিয়া পশুপতি বস্ত্র পরাণী। শোভাযাত্রার পুরোভাগে ছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও অন্যান্য মেতৃবৃন্দ। সে সময়ে সহস্র সহস্র কণ্ঠে গীত হইতেছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিরচিত সঙ্গীত—

‘ওদের বাঁধন যতই শক্ত হলে

‘ততই মোদের বাঁধন টুটবে।’

সঙ্গে সঙ্গে গুনিতে গুনিতে চলিলাম :

বিবির বাঁধন কাটিবে তুমি এমন শক্তিশালী—সেই সব ঐক্য-মন্ত্রে দীক্ষিত বাঙ্গালার জনসাধারণের যে মিলন যজ্ঞ আজ তাহা সমরপে আগিয়া মরমে পশিতেছে—ছন্দরে গুনাইয়া দিতেছে ফুলিঙ্গ। যে সময়ে কবির সেই ঋতু দীর্ঘ দেহ, হাস্যোজ্জ্বল গৌরবর্ণাঙ্গত মুখমণ্ডল তাহা রহিয়াছে মনে আঁকা, বাহিরে প্রকাশের নয়।

সে যুগে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে যে প্রাদেশিক রাষ্ট্রীয় সম্মিলনে উপস্থিত ছিলেন তাহার উল্লেখ করিলাম : বহরমপুর (১৮৯৫) সভাপতি আন্দোলন বঙ্গ, কৃষ্ণনগর (১৮৯৬) গুরুপ্রসাদ সেন, নাটোর (১৮৯৭) যতীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ঢাকা (১৮৯৯) কালীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। ঢাকার অধিবেশনে আমার সৌভাগ্য হইয়াছিল কবিকে দেখিবার ও কালীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের ইংরেজী ভাষণের বাংলায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাষণ! দর্শকগণ সকলে বিমুগ্ধ হইয়া উঠিলেন। ১৯০৮ সনে পাবনা মহলে প্রাদেশিক রাষ্ট্রীয় সম্মেলন হয়, রবীন্দ্রনাথ হন সভাপতি। তাহার ভাষণ বাংলায় পাঠ করেন। তাঁর অভিভাষণ প্রথম বাংলা অভিভাষণ। এ বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিম্নেই বলিয়াছিলেন।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেই সময়ে সম্পূর্ণ ভাবে রাজনৈতিক আন্দোলনে বা প্রদেশের চিত্তকরে আত্মনিয়োগ করেন। প্রাদেশিকতায় যোগ দিয়া তাঁাদের এবং ইংরেজের বিভিন্ন প্রকারের বিভিন্ন নির্যাতন, শাসন দণ্ডের বিরুদ্ধে সংগঠনমূলক বহু প্রবন্ধ লিখিয়াছিলেন, বক্তৃতা দিয়াছিলেন এবং গঠনমূলক কর্মক্ষেত্রে গাড়িয়া তুলিতেছিলেন।

কর্ণওয়ালিস দ্বারা যে বাড়ী হইতে ‘ভাণ্ডার’ নামক পত্রিকা বাহির হইত, তাহার প্রকাশক ছিলেন চট্টগ্রামবাসী কেন্দার নাথ দাশগুপ্ত। সেই পত্রিকায় ছিল নানা প্রকার সংগঠনমূলক প্রস্তাব এবং বহু প্রবন্ধ প্রকাশিত হয়। পূর্ববঙ্গে লাঠি ফুলারের উৎপীড়ন, কঠোর দমননাতি হিন্দুমুসলমানের বিভেদবুদ্ধি জাগাইয়া বিভেদ ও পরস্পরের মনো কলহ ও অশান্তির সৃষ্টি করিয়াছিল। সেই সময়ে নিভীক কবি বলিষ্ঠ ভাষায় ‘ভাণ্ডার’ পত্রিকায় নিগূহীতদের প্রতি যে নিবেদন প্রকাশ করেন তাহা উদ্ধৃত করিলাম :—

‘‘বাংলাদেশের বর্তমান স্বদেশী আন্দোলনে কুপিত রাজদণ্ড ও যাদিগকে পীড়িত করিয়াছে, তাঁহাদের পতি আমার নিবেদন এই যে, তাঁহাদের বেদনা যখন আজ সমস্ত বাংলাদেশ হৃদয়ের মনো বহন করিয়া লইল, তখন এই বেদনা অমৃতে পরিণত হইয়া তাঁহাদিগকে অমর করিয়া তুলিয়াছে। রাজচক্রের যে অপমান তাঁহাদের অভিমুখে নিক্ষিপ্ত হইয়াছিল, মাতৃভূমির করুণ কর-স্পর্শে তাহা বরমাল্যরূপে বারন করিয়া তাঁহাদের ললাটিকে আজ ভূষিত করিয়াছে। যাহারা যথাক্রমে গ্রহণ করিয়া থাকেন, বিধাতা যথাসময়ে তাঁহাদের অগ্নিপরীক্ষা করাইয়া সেই ব্রতের মহত্বকে উজ্জ্বল করিয়া প্রকাশ করেন। অদ্য কঠিন বৃতনিষ্ঠ বঙ্গভূমির প্রতিনিধিস্বরূপে সেই কয়জন এই দুঃস্বপ্ন অগ্নিপরীক্ষার জন্য বিধাতা কর্তৃক বিশেষ রূপে নির্বাচিত হইয়াছেন। তাঁহাদের জীবন সাংকী। রাজরোষরক্ত অগ্নিশিখা তাঁহাদের জীবনের ইতিহাসে লেশমাত্র কালিমা পাত না করিয়া বার বার স্ববর্ণ অক্ষরে লিখিয়া দিয়াছে। (‘বন্দে মাতরম্’ ভাণ্ডার ১৩১২ ফাল্গুন। ১৯০৬ মার্চ।)

সে যুগে এমন সভাসমিতি ছিল না যেখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যাইতে

অস্বীকার করিতেন। তাঁর গান ও কবিতার মনো, ভাষণ কন্ঠের মনো ছিল কল্মষ জীবনের গভীর প্রেরণা! তাঁর বা পথ নির্দেশের দিকে, তিনি জনগণকে লক্ষ্য করিয়া বলিয়াছেন ‘‘আমরা চলি সমুখ পানে’’ সমুখপানে চলিবার মত সাহস, বীর্যে তেজে এবং দৃঢ় নিশ্চিত চরণের গভীর তালে উজ্জল এবং মুখরিত যেমন

‘‘জাগরে নিশান বাজ্রে বিঘাণ

পুড়বে সকল বন্ধ।

উড়বে হাওয়ার বিজয় নিশান

ঘুচবে দ্বিধা দ্বন্দ্ব।

মৃত্যু সাগর মখন করে

অমৃতরস আনব ‘ধরে’

ওরা জীবন আঁকড়ে ধরে’

মরণ সাধন সাধবে।

কাঁদবে ওরা কাঁদবে।’

রবীন্দ্রনাথের স্বদেশী গানগুলি ১৩১২ সালে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছিল সে গানের প্রভাব যারা বাংলাদেশকে নূতন জীবন ও নূত প্রেরণা জাগাইয়া দিয়াছিল। সে সময়ের সঙ্গীত, ‘আমা সোনার বাংলা, আমি তোমায় ভালবাসি’, ‘বাংলাদেশের হৃদ হইতে কখন আপনি, কি অপকূপ বেশে বাহির হলে জননী প্রভৃতি গানগুলি স্তব্ধ পরীতে পল্লীতে গীত হইত। সে সময়ে রাজনীতিক সেন, অতুল প্রসাদ, বাবাবিশারদ, কামিনী ভট্টাচার্য প্রভৃতি বহুকবি এবং গায়কের রচিত গানও গীত হইত। কিং রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গীতগুলি সহজে বাংলা দেশের আকাশে বাতাসে ছড়াইয়া গিয়াছিল, বাঙ্গালীর প্রাণস্পর্শ করিয়াছিল।

তারপর স্বদেশী যুগের কর্মপ্রবাহ হইতে, উত্তেজনা হইতে কবি একদিন ‘ঘোয়ার মনো’ স্বদেশী উত্তেজনা হইতে বিদায় চাহিলেন,

‘বিদায় দেহ কম আমায় ভাই,

চলার পথে আমি ত আর নাই।’

গুনিতে পাই তাঁর মুখে—

‘রক্ত পৌজা, রাজ্য ভাঙ্গা গড়া,

মতের লাগি দেশ বিদেশে লড়া,

আলবালে জল সেচনা করা

উচ্চ শাখা স্বর্গ চাঁপার গাছে,

পারিনে আর চলতে সবার সাথে।’

একদিন যিনি পথে পথে ঘুরিয়াছেন, দেশের সেবার জন্য, দলাদলি মত-পার্থক্যের মনোও চলিয়াছেন পথে পথে; অবশেষে ক্লাস্ত পথিকের মত—করুণ কণ্ঠে কহিলেন :—

‘ছেড়েছি সব অকস্মাতের আশা

এখন কেবল একটি পেলেই বাঁচি,

এসেছি ভাই বাটের কাছাকাছি,

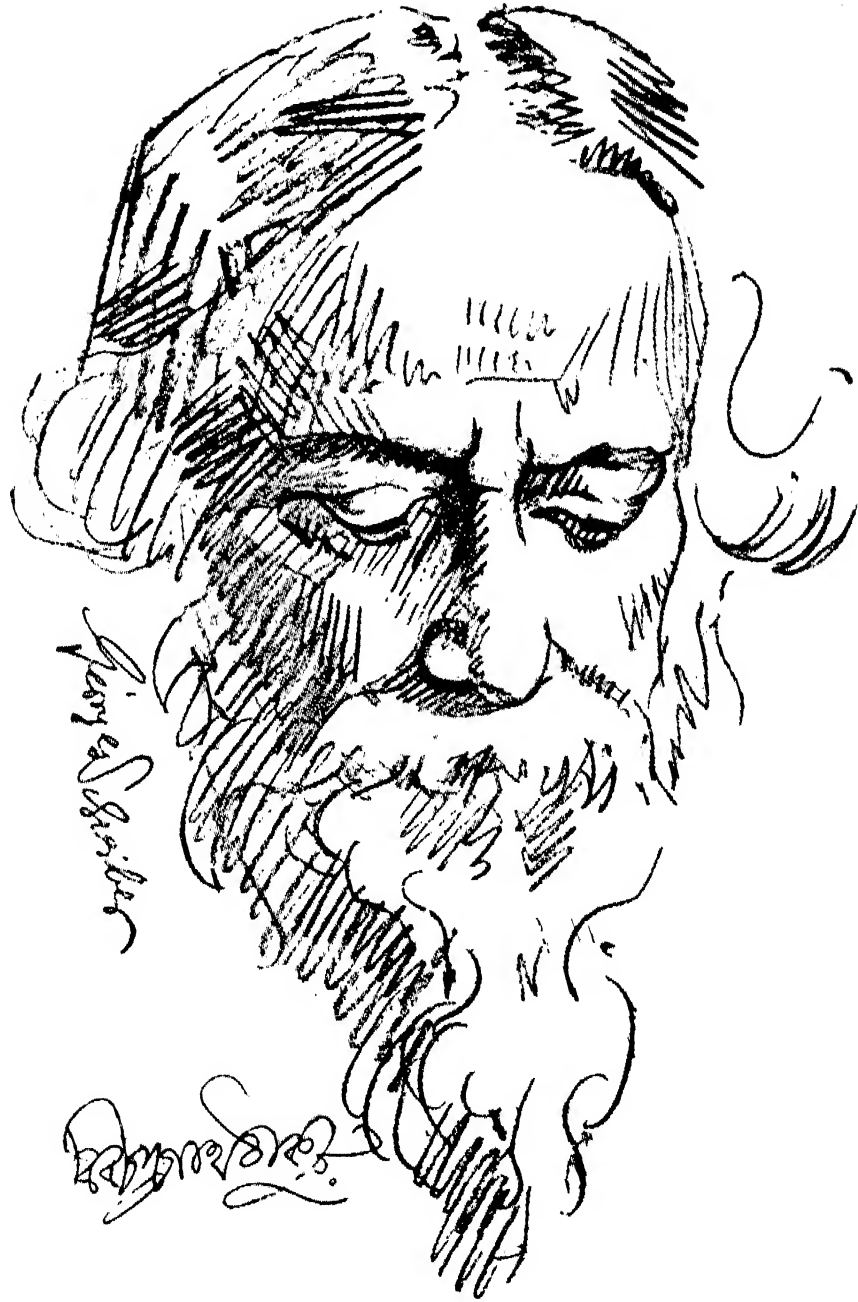


GURUDEVA & GANDHIJI

গুরুদেব ও গান্ধিজী

By Jamini Roy

— জামিনী রায়



মার্কিন শিল্পী
জর্জেস স্কাইবায়ারের
অঙ্কিত—

The Poet in America
drawn from life
By Georges Schreiber

এখন শুধু আকুল মনে যাচি
তোমার ভরে খেয়ার তরী ভাষা
ছেনেছি আজ চলেছি কার লাগি
ছেড়েছি সব অকস্মাতের আশা ।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্বন্ধে বলা ত সহজ নয়! স্বদেশী যুগে তাঁহার অবদান, তাঁহার ভাষা জনগণের সহিত প্রাণের মিলন, সমাজের সংকীর্ণতা, জাতি বর্ণ নির্বিশেষে বিভেদ, সমগ্র জাতিকে চিরদারিদ্র হইতে মুক্ত করিবার উদ্যোগ ও আশ্রয় চেষ্টা ছিল স্বদেশী যুগের পূণ্য-প্রাপন দিনে। 'স্বদেশী সমাজের' আদর্শ বুঝাইয়াছেন, পরী সংগঠনের প্রয়াস বাঁধিয়াছেন! এনেছিলেন—দেহের শক্তি, এনেছিলেন মনের ভক্তি। গাঢ়িয়াছেন প্রকৃত সত্য কথা :

'কামনখালি নাহি আমাদের,
অম নাহিকো জুটে।
যা আছে মোদের এনেছি সাজিয়ে
নবীন পর্বপুটে'

স্বদেশী যুগে সেই ১৯০৫ সাল হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া, বিপ্লবযুগের প্রাক্কলন পর্য্যন্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথের অবদান বুঝিতে হইলে, জানিতে হইবে আমাদের সে যুগের সাহিত্য, পত্র ও পত্রিকা, প্রবন্ধ-নিবন্ধ, জাতীয় শিক্ষা, ও শিক্ষালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা পদ্ধতি গঠনমূলক বহু কাণ্ড। তিনি সম্মিলিত হইয়া মনীষীগণের সহিত উপদেশ ও আপনার অভিনত প্রকাশ করিতে কুষ্ঠিত হন নাহি। কাছেই আমাদের অনু-রোধ, রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কাব্যে, ইতিহাসে, নাতিকে এবং স্বদেশী যুগে যদি বুঝিতে হয়, তাহার রাষ্ট্র-চেতনার ইতিহাস যদি জানিতে হয় তাহা হইলে আমাদের উচিত হইবে তৎকালীন বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস, বাঙ্গালার সমাজ ও বাঙ্গালার জাতীয় চরিত্র সম্বন্ধে অনুশীলন।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছিলেন মহাকবি এবং মহাবীর। বৈকল্য কবিত্বের মত তিনি "আপনি আচারি স্বয়ং অপরে শিক্ষায়" তার প্রত্যেকটি আচরণেই তাহা ব্যক্ত হইয়া আছে। তাঁহার সেই গানটির অপকল্প রূপ আমরা দেখিতে পাই—

'ডান হাতে তাঁর খড়্গ জ্বলে
বাঁ হাত করে শঙ্কারণ!'

তাঁহার 'প্রশ্ন' কবিতানিতে কি গভীর মগ্ন বেদনা বৃক্ক লইয়া অভিমান ভরেই বলিয়াছিলেন :

'ভগবান্ তুমি যুগে যুগে দূত পাঠিয়েছ বারে বারে
দয়াহীন সংসারে।

তারা বলে খেল ফমা করো যবে, বলে খেলো ভালবাসো—
অন্তর হতে বিদ্রোহ বিষ নাশো।—
বরণীয় তারা, সমরণীয় তারা, তবুও বাহির দ্বারে
আজি দুন্ধিনে ফিরানু তাদের বাণ নমস্বারে।'

জীবনের শেষ দিকে—গভীর বেদনায় বলিয়াছিলেন—
'ভাষাচক্রের পরিবর্তনের দ্বারা একদিন না একদিন ইংরেজকে এই ভারত সাম্রাজ্য ছেড়ে যেতে হবে। কিন্তু কোন্ ভারতবর্ষকে সে পিছনে ত্যাগ করে যাবে? কি লক্ষ্মীছাড়া দীনতার আবহুজ্ঞাকে? একাধিক শতাব্দীর শাসন দ্বারা যখন গুদ হয়ে যাবে এমন যে-কি এই দুর্ভাগ্যবশত নিঃস্বপ্নতাকে বহন করতে থাকবে। জীবনের প্রথম আরম্ভে সমগ্র মন থেকে বিশ্বাস করে-ছিলুম, যুরোপের সম্পদ, অস্তরের এই সভ্যতার দানকে। আর আজ আমার বিদায়ের দিনে সে বিশ্বাস একেবারে দেউলিয়া হয়ে গেছে।'

কবির বাণী আজ অস্বপ্ন হইয়াছে, ইংরেজকে এই ভারত সাম্রাজ্য ছেড়ে যেতে হয়েছে।

পাঠ্যপুস্তক জালিয়াণ ওয়ালাবাবের অত্যাচারে কবির হৃদয় উদ্বেলিত হইয়াছিল, 'মহামায়া বলহীনেন লভা'। এই মহাবাদ্যই ছিল তাঁহার কাব্যে, গীতি, কবিতায়, গীতি নাটকে, নাতিকে, প্রবন্ধে সর্বত্র পরিব্যাপ্ত।

সেকালে জাতীয় মিলন যথেষ্ট গুলিয়াছিল। তাঁহার কণ্ঠে মহামিলনের বাণী, এখনও কানে বাজে সেই স্তর তরঙ্গ :

'আজ সবাই জুটে আসুক ঢুটে যে যেখানে থাকে—

এবার যার খুশি সে বাঁধন কাটুক, আমরা বাঁধন মাকে।

আমরা পরাধ দিয়ে আপন করে বাঁধন তাঁরে সত্য ভোরে,

সত্যানেরই বাঁধ পাশে বাঁধন লক্ষপাকে।

আজ ধনী গরিব সবাই সমান। আয়রে হিন্দু, আয় মুসলমান—

আজকে সকল কাজ পড়ে থাক, আয়রে লাগে লাগে।

আজ দাওগো সবার দুয়ার খুলে, যাওগো সকল ভাষা ভুলে-
সকল ভাকের উপরে আজ মা আমাদের ডাকে ॥'

অন্তরবির আলো-শতদল
মুদিল অন্ধকারে।
ফুটিয়া উঠুক নবীন ভাষায়
শান্তিবিহীন নবীন আশায়
নব উদয়ের পারে ॥

—লেখক

সোনার মুকুট ভাষাইয়া দাও
শঙ্খা মেঘের তরীতে।
যাও চলে বরি বৈশভূষা খুলে
মরণ মহেশ্বরের দেউলে
নীলবে প্রণাম করিতে ॥

—লেখক



রবীন্দ্রনাথের ব্যঙ্গ-নাট্য

ডঃ আশুতোষ ভট্টাচার্য্য

রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাস্যরসাত্মক নাট্যরচনাকে সমগ্রভাবে কোন বিশেষ একটি মাত্র পরিচয় দ্বারা অভিহিত করতে পারা যায় না। তাঁহার প্রথম কয়েকটি রচনার মধ্যে কৌতুক রস (humour) প্রাধান্য লাভ করলেও তাদের অনতিকাল ব্যবধানেই রচিত তাঁর এই শ্রেণীর রচনার মধ্যে তার পরিবর্তে ব্যঙ্গরস (satire) প্রাধান্য লাভ করতে দেখা যায়। ক্রমে ব্যঙ্গরসও তাঁর রচনায় বিন্যস্ত হয়ে গিয়ে সর্বশেষে বাগ্‌বৈদগ্ধ-জ্ঞাত হাস্যরস (wit)-ই প্রাধান্য লাভ করে এইজন্যই সমগ্রভাবে তাঁর এই শ্রেণীর নাট্য রচনাকে বঙ্গনাট্যের সাধারণ সংজ্ঞায় অভিহিত করাটী সঙ্গত বলে মনে হয়।

বাংলা সাহিত্যে প্রথম সংজ্ঞাটির ব্যবহার বড় অস্পষ্ট ও ব্যাপক। কৌতুক-রসাত্মক (humorous) নাট্য-রচনা নির্দেশ করতেই প্রথম কথাকারি ব্যবহার যথার্থ সঙ্গত হয়; কিন্তু বর্তমানে ব্যবহারতঃ ইহা সকল প্রকৃতির হাস্যরসাত্মক নাট্যরচনাই নির্দেশ করে থাকে। ইংরেজী সংজ্ঞা অনুযায়ী Humour, Satire ও Wit-এর যে স্পষ্ট পার্থক্য আছে, বাংলায় তা অবিকার্য্য ক্ষেত্রেই স্বীকৃত হয় না—এই প্রকৃতির সকল শ্রেণীর রচনাই 'প্রহসন' বলে পরিচিত হয়। কিন্তু এদের প্রত্যেকের দ্বারাই হাস্যরস সৃষ্টি হলেও, এদের অঙ্গপ্রকৃতি পরস্পর পৃথক—এ বিষয়টি ভাল করে বুঝতে না পারলে এদের যথার্থ রসগ্রহণও সম্ভব হয় না।

বাংলা নাট্য সাহিত্যের প্রথম যুগে প্রহসন রচনার ভিতর দিয়েই এদেশের কয়েকজন শ্রেষ্ঠ নাট্যকারের প্রতিভার বিকাশ হয়েছিল। বাংলা নাট্য সাহিত্যের প্রথম যুগের এই প্রহসন রচনার দ্বারা তাঁর পরবর্তী যুগেও এমন কি দ্বিজেন্দ্রলাল রায় পর্যন্তও অব্যাহত ছিল। এই যুগের প্রহসন রচনার একমাত্র উপজীব্য ছিল, বাংলার সমসাময়িক হিন্দু সমাজ, পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার আদর্শে উদ্বুদ্ধ হওয়ার ফলে তৎকালীন হিন্দু সমাজের মধ্যে যে সকল দোষত্রুটি স্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠতে লাগল, তা নিয়ে প্রধানতঃ ব্যঙ্গ করাটী প্রহসনগুলোর উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। এই হিসাবে প্রহসনগুলো ছিল প্রধানতঃ ব্যঙ্গ-শ্লোষাত্মক। কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও একথা স্বীকার করতে হয় যে, যে যুগের নাট্যকারদের মধ্যে যথার্থ ব্যঙ্গ বা শ্লোষাত্মক প্রহসন রচনা করবার প্রকৃত প্রতিভা সকলের ছিল না। এঁদের মধ্যে একমাত্র মাইকেল মধুসূদনের রচনাতেই ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মনোভাবের যথার্থ বিকাশ দেখতে পাওয়া যায়। রাখনারায়ণ তর্করত্ন ও দীনবন্ধু মিত্র এ দুজনেরই প্রতিভা হাস্যরসাত্মক (humour) নাট্য রচনার প্রতিভা। ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনার মধ্যে সৃষ্টিধর্মী গুণ বিকাশ লাভ করতে পারে না; কারণ ব্যঙ্গরচনার মধ্যে মানব চরিত্রের প্রতি লেখকের সহানুভূতির

পরিচয় প্রকাশ পায় না, বরং তাঁর প্রতি চরম অবিশ্বাস ও অশ্রদ্ধার ভাবই প্রকাশ পেয়ে থাকে। যেখানে সহানুভূতির অভাব, সেখানেই চরিত্র সৃষ্টির বার্পতা। অবশ্য হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনার ভিতর দিয়েও যে উচ্চাঙ্গের সৃষ্টিধর্ম সাধিত হতে পারে, তাও নয়—কারণ প্রহসনের মধ্য দিয়ে জীবনের সর্ম্মূল পর্যন্ত লেখকের দৃষ্টি প্রবেশ করতে পারে না—কেবল মাত্র তাঁর উপর স্তরেই তাঁর দৃষ্টি আবদ্ধ হয়ে থাকে; সে জন্য সেখানেও উচ্চাঙ্গের সৃষ্টি সাফল্যের যে সামান্য সম্ভাবনাত্ব আছে, ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনার মধ্যে তাও নেই। ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনার আর একটি প্রধান বৈশিষ্ট্য হলো এই যে, এর মধ্যে কেবল মাত্র মানব চরিত্রের কল্পিত ও বাস্তব ক্রটিগুলিই লেখকের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে থাকে। কিন্তু কেবলমাত্র ক্রটিগুলির মধ্যেই মানুষের চরিত্র সৌম্যবদ্ধ হয়ে থাকতে পারেনা—ক্রটি এবং গুণ দুয়ে মিলেই মানুষের চরিত্রের সম্পূর্ণতা, ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনার মধ্যে চরিত্রের এই দুটি জিনিষই সমান ভাবে অভিব্যক্তি লাভ করতে পারে না বলেও তা সৃষ্টিধর্মী সাহিত্যের মর্যাদা লাভ করতে সক্ষম হয় না, অতএব হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনা থেকেও ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনা সৃষ্টি হিসাবে নিকটে।

সমাজধর্ম ও সম্প্রদায় নিরপেক্ষ ব্যক্তিচরিত্রের চিরন্তন মানবিক দৃর্বলতার উপর ভিত্তি করে প্রকৃত হাস্যরসাত্মক (humour) নাট্যিক বাংলা নাট্যসাহিত্যের আদিযুগে খুব অল্পই রচিত হয়েছে। বাংলা নাট্যসাহিত্যের আদি যুগের যখন অবসান হয়ে আসছে, তখনই বাংলা কথাসাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের আবির্ভাব হলো, বাংলা সাহিত্যে হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনায় বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের একটি বিশিষ্ট স্থান আছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র সম্পর্কে এ সম্বন্ধে বলেছেন, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রই বাংলা সাহিত্যে সর্বপ্রথম নির্মল গুহ্ব হাস্যের যুগো। 'যে গতানুগতিক বিষয়বস্তু অবলম্বন করে এ পর্যন্ত বাংলা সাহিত্যে হাস্যরসের সৃষ্টি হচ্ছিল, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের মধ্যেই তাঁর প্রথম ব্যতিক্রম দেখা দিল। কিন্তু তা হলেও এ কথা স্বীকার করতে হবেই যে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের হাস্যরসও প্রধানতঃ ব্যঙ্গশ্লোষাত্মক। তাঁর 'লোকরহস্য' ও 'মুচিরাম গুড়ের জীবন-চরিত' প্রধানতঃ তাঁরই নিদর্শন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর প্রথম জীবনের হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনায় বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের এই 'লোকরহস্য' দ্বারা যে কতকটা প্রভাবিত হয়েছিলেন, এ কথা অস্বীকার করবার উপায় নেই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সর্বপ্রথম 'কৌতুক নাট্য' 'ছাত্রের পরীক্ষা' ১৯২৯ সালে 'বালক' পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হয়। এর সঙ্গে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের 'লোকরহস্য'র অন্তর্গত 'গ্রাম্যকথার' বিষয় ও রচনাগত সাদৃশ্য আছে। যাই হোক, রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম জীবনের কৌতুক নাট্য রচনার প্রেরণা যে বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের 'লোক-রহস্য' থেকে এসেছিল, তা স্বীকার করে নিলেও অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ এ বিষয়ে যে একটি স্বীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য লাভ করতে

সক্ষম হলেন, তা অনুভব করতে পারা যায়। তাঁর সেই বৈশিষ্ট্যের স্রুপক উপলব্ধি করাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'হাস্যকৌতুক' ১৯০৭ খ্রিষ্টাব্দে পুস্তকাকারে প্রথম প্রকাশিত হয়, কিন্তু তাঁর অস্তুর্ভুক্ত নাট্যরচনাগুলো তাঁর কয়েক বৎসর আগে থেকেই 'বালক' ও 'ভারতী' পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হতে থাকে। ইহাই রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনা। এগুলোর বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পর্কে 'রবীন্দ্রনাথ' নিজে 'হাস্য-কৌতুক'ের ভূমিকায় উল্লেখ করেছেন, 'এই ক্ষুদ্র কৌতুক নাট্য-গুলি হেঁয়ালী নাট্য নাম ধরিয়া "বালক" ও "ভারতী"তে বাহির হইয়াছিল। যুরোপে শারাদ (Charad) নামক এক প্রকার নাট্য খেলা প্রচলিত আছে, কতকটা তাহারই অনুকরণে এগুলি লেখা হয়, ইহার মধ্যে হেঁয়ালি রক্ষা করিতে থাকা লেখা সংকচিত করিতে হইয়াছিল—আশা করি সেই হেঁয়ালির সন্ধান করিতে বর্তমান পাঠকগণ অনাবশ্যক বশে স্বীকার করিবেন না।

কিন্তু ইউরোপের 'শারাদ'ের সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাস্য-কৌতুকের নাট্যনিবন্ধগুলির কোনও সাদৃশ্য নাই। 'শারাদ' হেঁয়ালি জাতীয় রচনা। শব্দার্থ-বৈচিত্র্যের উপর ইউরোপীয় 'শারাদ'ের হেঁয়ালি প্রধানতঃ নির্ভর করে, এর হাস্যরসও সেইজন্য শব্দ-প্রয়োগ কৌশল দ্বারাষ্ট সৃষ্টি হয়ে থাকে। কিন্তু 'হাস্য-কৌতুক'ের নাট্য নিবন্ধগুলোতে প্রকৃত হাস্যরসের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে শব্দ-প্রয়োগের কৌশল দ্বারা নয়, বরং বিষয় বৈচিত্র্য দ্বারা রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছেন, 'এই হেঁয়ালি নাট্যগুলি বিশেষভাবে বালকদিগের আনন্দ দিবার জন্য লিখিত হইয়াছিল।' এদের মধ্যে অধিকাংশ নাট্যনিবন্ধই বালকদের নির্দোষ আমোদের উপযোগী হলেও 'আর্থ অনার্ব' প্রমুখ কয়েকটি রচনা তীব্র ব্যঙ্গাত্মক এবং তা কদাচ বালকদের নির্দোষ আমোদ দিবার জন্য রচিত হইয়াছিল বলে মনে করা যেতে পারেনা। তবে একথা সত্য 'হাস্যকৌতুক'ের মধ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মনোভাবের পরিচয় অপেক্ষাকৃত অল্পই পাওয়া যায়। কিন্তু এর ভিতর দিয়েই যে তিনি তাঁর ভবিষ্যৎ ব্যঙ্গ ও শ্লোষাত্মক রচনার দিকে অগ্রসর হয়ে যাচ্চেন, তা অনুভব করা যায়। বালকদিগকে নির্দোষ আমোদ দিবার উদ্দেশ্যে তিনি তাঁর হাস্যরসাত্মক রচনায় প্রবৃত্ত হলেও অধিক কাল তিনি তাঁর এই লক্ষ্য হ্রি রাখতে পারেন নি। তাঁর ফলেই প্রকাশিত হয় 'ব্যঙ্গকৌতুক', 'ব্যঙ্গকৌতুক'ের 'রসিকতার কলাফল' ও ডেয়েয়া পিপড়ের মতবা' নামক কৌতুক প্রবন্ধ দুইটি 'হাস্যকৌতুক'ের কৌতুক নাট্যগুলোর সমসাময়িক রচনা বলে তা রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরবর্তী ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মনোভাব রচনা বলে তা রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরবর্তী ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মনোভাব থেকে সম্পূর্ণ মুক্ত। এই প্রবন্ধ দুটির উপর বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের প্রভাবও বিলক্ষণ অনুভব করা যায়। 'ব্যঙ্গকৌতুক'ের এই দুইটি মাএ রচনা ব্যতীত তাঁর সমসাময়িক অন্যান্য রচনার মধ্যেও ব্যঙ্গ ও শ্লোষাত্মক মনোভাবের পরিচয় স্পষ্ট হয়ে উঠেছে। তাঁর সমসাময়িক কাব্যগ্রন্থ 'মানসী'র কয়েকটি কবিতার মধ্যেও এই তীব্র ব্যঙ্গাত্মক মনোভাবেরই অভিব্যক্তি দেখতে পাওয়া যাবে।

'ব্যঙ্গ কৌতুক'ের 'স্বর্গীয় প্রহসন' ও 'বর্শীকরণ ব্যতীত আর কোন রচনাই নাটকের লক্ষ্যাক্রান্ত নয় এদের মধ্যে 'স্বর্গীয় প্রহসনে' প্রায়া দেবদেবী সম্বন্ধে যে তীব্র ব্যঙ্গ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে, তা কেবল মাত্র নির্দোষ আমোদ উপভোগের উপযোগী নয়। একজনকে আঘাত দিয়ে যে আমাদের সৃষ্টি হয়, তা নির্দোষ ও উচ্ছাঙ্গের আমোদ বলে কেউ স্বীকার করবেন না। 'ব্যঙ্গ-

কৌতুক'ের রচনার মধ্যে এই শ্রেণীর আমোদ সৃষ্টির প্রয়াস দেখতে পাওয়া যায়—একেই কৌতুকের পরিবর্তে ব্যঙ্গ বা শ্লোষ বলা হয়ে থাকে। 'স্বর্গীয় প্রহসনে' তাঁরই পরিচয় আছে। স্বর্গীয় দীনেশ চন্দ্র সেন মহাশয়ের 'বঙ্গভাষা ও সাহিত্য' প্রকাশিত হবার পর, তাতে বর্ণিত লৌকিক সাহিত্যের বৃত্তান্ত পাঠ করে তাকেই ব্যঙ্গ করবার উদ্দেশ্যে এই 'স্বর্গীয় প্রহসন' রচিত হয়।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রধানতঃ কবি, সেইজন্য চিরদিনই পাখিব ভোগ-বিলাসের পতি আসক্ত—তিনি চিরদিনই বৈরাগ্যের বিরোধী। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের সমসাময়িক কালে স্বামী বিবেকানন্দের নেতৃত্বে একদলে স্বার্থত্যাগী বিবাগী সন্ন্যাসী সম্প্রদায়ের সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। কেউ কেউ মনে করেন, এই আত্মত্যাগী সন্ন্যাসী সম্প্রদায়কে ব্যঙ্গ করেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের পূর্ণাঙ্গ ব্যঙ্গ নাটক 'চিরকুমার সভা' রচিত হয়। কিন্তু প্রত্যক্ষভাবে স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ পতিষ্ঠিত সন্ন্যাসী সম্প্রদায়কে লক্ষ্য করেই যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'চিরকুমার সভা' রচিত হয়েছিল, এমন কথা বলা কঠিন। পৃথিবীর প্রকৃষ্ট পক্ষপক্ষ দিয়ে আত্মরূপ করে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাব্য-সাধনা সার্থক হয়েছে; রবীন্দ্র সাধনার মধ্যেই ভোগশক্তির বীজ ছিল। 'চিরকুমার সভা'র তাঁরই অভিব্যক্তি হয়েছে মাত্র। যেখানে ব্যক্তি বা সম্প্রদায় বিশেষ লক্ষ্য থাকে, ব্যঙ্গের অভিব্যক্তি সেখানে অত্যন্ত তীব্র ও প্রত্যক্ষ হয়ে ওঠে। কিন্তু সেখানে সাধনায় সমাধ লক্ষ্যভূত হয়, সেখানে ব্যঙ্গের অভিব্যক্তি তত আনন্দ হয় উঠতে পারে না। একথা সত্য যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ চোখের সামনে যদি কোনও ব্যস্ত আদর্শ লাভ করতেন, তা' হলে তাকে যত সার্থক ভাবে জীবন্ত করে তুলতে পারতেন, কেবল মাত্র কল্পনাকে আশ্রয় করে তাকে তেমন সার্থক রূপায়িত করতে পারতেন না। কল্পনাশ্রিত চরিত্রগুলো তাঁর একটি কাব্যবর্মী হয়ে উঠত। 'চিরকুমার সভা'র ব্যঙ্গ নাটকে যে চরিত্রটি রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রত্যক্ষ জীবনানুভূতি-স্রোত ও চন্দ্রাবুর চরিত্র। রবীন্দ্রনাথের স্বাভাবিক মনোভাব একজনের চরিত্র লক্ষ্য করে চন্দ্রাবুর চরিত্র পরিকল্পিত হয়েছে, অতএব নাটকে চন্দ্রাবুর আদর্শের প্রতি ব্যঙ্গ অপেক্ষা নাট্যকারের মহানুভূতির ভাবই অধিক প্রকাশ পেয়েছে। যদি চন্দ্রাবুর উপরই নাট্যকারের মহানুভূতির ভাব সর্বাঙ্গিক প্রবল বলে অনুভূত হয়, তাখাপি একথা সত্য যে অন্যান্য চরিত্রগুলোও তাঁর মহানুভূতি থেকে একেবারে বঞ্চিত হয় নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাটক ও কাব্য রচনায় ব্যক্তিবিশেষকে যেখানে আক্রমণ করা হয়েছে, সেখানে ব্যঙ্গ বা শ্লোষাত্মক ভাব যেমন অত্যন্ত তীব্র হয়ে উঠেছে—বাংলা সাহিত্যে এই তীব্রতার আর কোনও তুলনা হতে পারে না—'চিরকুমার সভা'র এই ব্যঙ্গ ভাব তেমন তীব্র হয়ে উঠতে পারে নি। এথেকেও স্পষ্ট প্রমাণিত হয় যে স্বামী বিবেকানন্দের সন্ন্যাসী সম্প্রদায়কে একান্ত ভাবে লক্ষ্য করে এই ব্যঙ্গ নাটক রচিত হয় নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর কোন কোন ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনায় তদানীন্তন রক্ষণশীল হিন্দু সমাজের প্রতিনিধি শশধর তর্কচাউরামণি ও চন্দ্রনাথ বসু প্রমুখ ব্যক্তিকে যে তীব্রভাবে আক্রমণ করেছেন, 'চিরকুমার সভা'র সে ভাবের বাতিক্রম দেখা যায়। অতএব এতে ব্যক্তি কিংবা সম্প্রদায় বিশেষকে আক্রমণ করার পরিবর্তে বরং মানুষের দুর্বলতাক্রম দুর্বলতাগুলোর উপর তাঁর মহানুভূতিপূর্ণ দৃষ্টিপাতেরই পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। সেইজন্য 'চিরকুমার সভা' ব্যঙ্গাত্মক রচনা হয়েও সৃষ্টিবর্মী সাহিত্য বলে রসোত্তীর্ণ হতে সক্ষম হয়েছে। 'বৈকুণ্ঠের খাতা' 'চিরকুমার সভা'রই স্বজাতি হওয়া সত্ত্বেও আর একটি বিশেষত্বপূর্ণ বলে অনুভব করা যায়।

সাধারণের জীবন-যাত্রার কথা সাধারণের ভাষায় না বলে বিদেশীয় ভাষায় বলা রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিকটে প্রথম থেকেই একটি অন্তর ব্যাপার। অস্তুতঃ ইং ১৮৯২তে যখন ‘শিক্ষার হেরফের’ লিখিত হয় তখন থেকে এ বিষয় রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবিশ্রাম লেখনী চালনা করেছেন। তাঁর শিক্ষা-তত্ত্ব ও তাঁর শিক্ষা-প্রয়াস তাঁর জীবনের একটি মহৎকর্মসমূহ ‘শিক্ষার বাহন’ নিয়ে আলোচনা তার একটি বড় দিক। বাঙালী জীবনযাত্রার অন্যান্য ক্ষেত্রে, বাঙলা ভাষার প্রসারের কথা সে তুলনায় ছোট, সাধারণের কাছে বাঙলার প্রচলন করার তারই একটি অংশ। তথাপি ১৮৯৭ এর সেই মাসের ময়মনসিংহের পরেকার এই প্রায় ঘণ্টা-গড় বৎসরে বাঙলা দেশের সর্বসাধারণের কাছে আমরা বাঙলাভাষার কতখানি প্রসার করেছি তা একবার জিজ্ঞাস্য করা যেতে পারে এই রবীন্দ্র-জন্ম শতাব্দী উপলক্ষে।

দু’ একটি কথা হয়তো এ প্রসঙ্গেও প্রথমেই বুলো রাখা দরকার জন্ম-সাধারণের কাছে বাঙলার প্রচলন ঘটানো স্বাভাবিক তত্বটা সহজসাধ্য নয়। একমাত্র বাঙলা ভাষা সর্বক্ষেত্রে সর্ব সময়ে প্রচলিত থাকবে, এমন কথা এ দেশের বিশেষ অবস্থায় কেউ বলবে না। রবীন্দ্রনাথও বলতেন না। তিনিও ইংরেজি ব্যবহার করতেন, এমন কি, যে ভাষায় মূল রচনা লিখেছেন। প্রয়োজন মতো ইংরেজি, হিন্দী, উড়িয়া প্রভৃতি ভাষা ব্যবহার করতেই হবে, কোনো ভাষাই সর্বাংশ ত্যাগ নয়। তবে বাঙালী দেশে বাঙলার শিক্ষা দীক্ষায়, কাজেকর্মে বাঙলা ভাষাই হবে সাধারণ ভাষা—এই হল মূল নীতি।

একথা বোঝা উচিত। এই মূল নীতি না মানলেও ইংরেজ শাসকেরাও মানতেন যে, দেশের মানুষকে যা বলা প্রয়োজন তা বিদেশীয় ভাষায় বললেই শেষ হয় না। দেশের ভাষায়ও বলতে হয়। ভারতবর্ষের মতো বহুভাষিক দেশ শাসন-কালে তাঁরা ইংরেজিকে তাঁদের রাষ্ট্রভাষা করেছিলেন, তা ঠিক। কিন্তু প্রধান-প্রধান, আইন, নির্দেশ, ফরমাস, বিজ্ঞপ্তি এসবকে বাঙলা, উর্দু, তামিল, প্রভৃতি প্রত্যেকটি ভারতীয় প্রধান ভাষাতেই কি তাঁরা অনুবাদ না করে পারতেন? অর্থাৎ, সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষে একমাত্র ইংরেজির যোগে রাজকার্য তখনো চলে নি; এখনো হিন্দীর জোরে চলতে পারে না—চলে না। ভারত-রাষ্ট্রের দিক থেকে একটি প্রধান রাষ্ট্রভাষা থাকতে পারে, যেমন, ইংরেজি আছে, এবং হিন্দী করার চেষ্টা আছে। কিন্তু ভারতবর্ষেও একাধিক রাষ্ট্রভাষার প্রয়োজন থাকে। সেইরূপ রাজ্যের ক্ষেত্রেও বাঙলায় প্রধান এবং সাধারণ রাজ্যভাষা বাঙলা হলেও প্রয়োজন মতো ইংরেজি, গোঁড়ালি, হিন্দী, ওড়িয়া প্রভৃতির ব্যবহার বিহিত হওয়া উচিত। মূলকথানি হল—গণতান্ত্রিক দেশের রাজকর্ম সাধারণতঃ সে ভাষাতেই চলবে যে ভাষা দেশের সাধারণ মানুষের যেমন, বাঙলায় বাঙালীর।

স্বাধীনতা লাভের পর এ বিষয়ে চেষ্টা পশ্চিম বাঙলার রাজকার্য শুরু হয়েছিল। কিন্তু ক্রমে কর্তৃপক্ষের তাতে উৎসাহের অভাব দেখা দেয়। কেন তা আমরা জানি। কিন্তু সে কথায় না গিয়ে আমরা আলোচনা করতে পারি—সম্প্রতি অবস্থান কী। ১৯৫৭ইং সালে বিধান পরিষদে আমরা এই সমাগত রবীন্দ্রশত-বাষিকীর কথা উল্লেখ করে অনুরোধ করেছিলাম যে, পশ্চিম বাঙলার কর্তৃপক্ষ যেন তখন (১৯৫৭ইং থেকে) এমন ভাবে

প্রস্তুত হন যাতে বাং ১৩৬৮ এর (ইং ১৯৬১) পঁচিশে বৈশাখ থেকে পশ্চিম বাঙলার রাজকার্য সাধারণ ভাবে বাঙলাভাষা চালিত হয়। তখন পর্যন্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ এ কথায় নীরব থাকেন, নীতি হিসাবেও এই কথাটি গ্রহণ করেন নি। পরে ১৯৫৮ইং সালে আইন সভায় সর্বসম্মতি ক্রমে সেই নীতি গৃহীত হয়। কিন্তু এ পর্যন্তই তা কার্যে পরিণত করার জন্য সরকার পক্ষে তখন কোনো উদ্যোগ দেখা গেল না। রাজকার্য বাঙলায় পরিচালিত করতে হলে কিছু কিছু ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা প্রয়োজন। যেমন, বাঙলা টাইপরাইটিং ও বাঙলা শিফাও-দক্ষ কর্মচারীর এবং কিছু পরিভাষা-প্রণয়নের। প্রতিবৎসর আমরা এসবের জন্য কী কী উপায়ে গ্রহণ করা প্রথম দরকার সে সব ব্যবস্থাও উপায়ের কথা ও প্রস্তাব সরকার পক্ষের নিকট করেছি। কর্তৃপক্ষ তাতে একবারও কর্পণাতিও করেন নি। এই বৎসরই গত বাজেট সেসময় ১৯৫৮ এর প্রস্তাব উল্লেখ করে যখন অধ্যাপক নির্মল ভট্টাচার্য বিশেষ প্রস্তাব তুললেন তখন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মহাশয় প্রথম মুখ ফুটে বললেন—কী বাবা বা অস্তবিধা। তাঁর একটি কথা অবশ্য শিফাও, পরিভাষা, আর্থিক প্রশাসন বিভাগীয় আপত্তি, ইত্যাদি। তা ছাড়া, এই আশ্বাস এবার তিনি দেন যে, ১৯৫৮ এর প্রস্তাব অনুযায়ী আইনের খসড়া তৈরী হচ্ছে। বারেরবারে তাঁকে অনুরোধ করেও তাঁর থেকে এর বেশি প্রতিশ্রুতি পাওয়া যায় নি—সে খসড়া প্রস্তুতির কাজ দ্বারমুখিত হবে, এবং পঁচিশে বৈশাখের দিনে বা তৎপূর্বে তিনি নীতিগত ভাবে বাঙলা ভাষার এ স্বীকৃতি দেবেন। বলা-বাহুল্য, ১৯৫৮ সালের আইন সভার শাখার সর্বসম্মত প্রস্তাবের পরে এই সরকারী স্বীকৃতি অর্পণ হয়। সেই জনাই অর্পণ হয় তাঁর সাম্প্রতিক বিবৃতি। তাতে একটি কথাই প্রমাণিত হয়, ইং ১৯৫৮ সনের পূর্বে বা পরেও তা এবং প্রস্তাব পাশ হওয়া সম্বন্ধে এ বিষয়ে সরকার কিছুমাত্র উদ্যোগী মন। শিফাও টাইপরাইটিং এবং পরিভাষা সম্বন্ধে যে কথা এখন বিবৃতিতে বলেছেন তাতেও কিছু-মাত্র কার্যকর ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের চিহ্ন নেই। তিন বৎসর ধরে আমরা সরকারকে বারবার বলেছি (১) বাংলা টাইপরাইটিং যন্ত্রের উন্নতির প্রয়োজন বোধ হলে ১ লক্ষ টাকা আর একটি পারিতোষিক ঘোষণা করুন—দেখবেন ইংরেজ জার্মান, মার্কিন প্রভৃতি যন্ত্র-ব্যবসায়ীরা ছ’ মাসের মধ্যে তা তৈরী করবেই কারণ সে যন্ত্র-বিক্রয়ে মুনাফাও হবে তাদের অসামান্য। আর পারিতোষিক না ঘোষণা করে শুধু সরকারী অনুরোধ জানালেও সোভিয়েত, চেক পূর্ব জার্মান যন্ত্রোদ্ভাবকরা উন্নত যন্ত্র তৈরী করে দিতে পারবেন। যে-কালে সোভিয়েত অনুবাদ-যন্ত্র তৈরী করছে, পরিসংখ্যানের জটিল যন্ত্র তৈরী করছে, সেকালে টাইপ রাইটিং-এর যন্ত্রের উন্নতি একটি কঠিন বিষয় নয়—অবশ্য যদি পশ্চিম বাঙলার সরকার তা সভাই কামনা করেন। (২) বাঙলা-শিফাও-টাইপ-রাইটিং শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করুন—শিক্ষাদাতাদের সাহায্য করুন, এবং অস্তুত বৎসরে ২০টি বাঙলা অনার্স বা এম-এ পরীক্ষার্থী ছাত্র কয়েক বৎসর ৭০।৭৫ টাকা বৃত্তিদান করুন। তাদের মধ্যে যারা যোগ্যতা অর্জন করবে তাদের সরকারী চাকরির সুযোগও থাকবে। এ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করলে এ বেকারের বাজারে বাঙলা দেশে টাইপিষ্ট-এর অভাবও হবে না। (৩) পরিভাষা-পরিষদ পুনর্গঠিত ও স্থায়ী করে সরকারের উপদেষ্টা করে তাদের স্থাপিত করুন। জ্ঞান ও বিজ্ঞানের নূতন আবিষ্কার প্রতিদিন হচ্ছে; কাজেই, পরিভাষা পরিষদও স্থায়ী হওয়া উচিত, বৎসরে বৎসরে তারা পরীক্ষা

করে পরিভাষা গ্রহণ ও বর্জন করবেন,—এই ছিল স্বর্গত রাজ-শেখর বঙ্গ মহাশয়ের উপদেশ। একথা কী সরকার কী বিশ্ব-বিদ্যালয় কেউ বুঝতে চান না। শুধু তা নয়, অশিক্ষিত-পটুদের অহমিকা এসব অঞ্চলে দুর্ভেদ্য, তা রবীন্দ্রনাথেরও অভিজ্ঞতা। কল্পিত বা উদ্ভট পরিভাষা এসব মহলের 'রসিকতার' একমাত্র উৎস। অনেক সময়ে তা দেখে অন্যদের মনে হতে পারে সরস্বতী এঁদের নিকটে বশ থাক, তুচ্ছ তথ্য নিবেদনের দায়িত্বও 'শিরসি মা লিখ, মা লিখ, মা লিখ।' পরিভাষা যথাক্রমে এঁদের দৃষ্টিচ্যুত ঘটবার আগে এদেশে রাজা রাজেন্দ্র লাল মিত্র প্রমুখ পণ্ডিতেরা বহু কথাই ভেবে গিয়েছেন। ভাবনার শক্তিও তাদের ছিল, সম্ভবতঃ বিদ্যার যুদ্ধে কাণ্ডগোলও তাদের কম ছিল না। এমন কি এখানেও যে সব পরে যখন মনে এই পরিভাষার প্রস্তাব যে বিশিষ্ট পণ্ডিতদের সভায় আলোচিত হয়েছে, সে বিষয়ে যে অতি-যুক্তিসিদ্ধ মন্তব্য বাঙলা দেশেরই ভাষাবিদ পণ্ডিত প্রণয়ন করেছেন, আর অধ্যাপক স্তনীতিকুমার চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের যে ইংরেজি মন্তব্য যে পুস্তিকাকারে এই কলকাতা শহরেই (নিদোদয়-প্রেস থেকে) প্রকাশিত হয়েছে,—এ কথাটা বার বার বললেও ভাবেন না আনাদেরও মগ্নিভা ও তার মগ্নিগদ্যাতারা, বিদ্যালয়ের যজ্ঞীবর্ণ ও যজ্ঞগদ্যাতারা।

আরও হাস্যকর যুক্তিও আছে—যেমন, প্রশাসক (ও কোনো কোনো মন্ত্রী) মহাশয়েরা নাকি ইংরেজি ব্যতীত বাঙলায় নিজেদের বক্তব্য বলতে অসুবিধা বোধ করেন। কথানি অর্থসত্য হতে পারে। কারণ বাঙলা মাতৃভাষা, কিন্তু তা শেখা হয় নি, অতএব তাতে মনোভাব প্রকাশ স্তম্ভ ভাবে করতে না পারলেও দেশের লোকে দুঃখের। কিন্তু ইংরেজি পরভাষা, শত বেত্রাঘাতেও যে তা আয়ত্ত করা দুঃসাধ্য অতএব তা অপরের পক্ষে বোঝাই অসম্ভব আইন সভায় তা প্রতিদিনই উপলব্ধি করা যায়। এমন কি প্রকাশক দপ্তরের লিখিত আইনও নির্ভুল ইংরেজিতে লেখা হয় না। ইংরেজির যে 'দোড়' দেখা যায় তাতে মনে হয়—বাঙলা ভাষার অপেক্ষাও ইংরেজিভাষা অপরিণত ও অ-বিকশিত, আর না হয় বক্তারা ও লেখকেরা যে ভাষা বলেন তা ইংরেজি নয়—বংরেজি বা 'বাংরোজি'।

এই এখন অবস্থা—যাঁরা জেগে ঘুমোন না, চোখ খুলে ঘুমোন, তাঁদের জাগাতে অন্ততঃ ১৮৯২ থেকে চেষ্টা করে রবীন্দ্রনাথও পারেন নি। বর্তমানে পারে দু' দল—এক দল সংবাদপত্র, যাঁরা মালিকের চালনা যত্নেও একেবারে এ বিষয়ে উদাসীন হন না—আসামে ও কাটাড়ে বাঙলা চলার খেকে পশ্চিম বাঙলায় বাঙলা প্রচার কম জরুরি কাজ নয়—কম আয়াস সাধ্য ও তা হবে না। দ্বিতীয় দল—জন সাধারণ দার্জিলিং-এর গোঁরাবাদের অনুসরণ। তারা এখন কর্তৃপক্ষের চৈতন্য সম্পাদন করছেন গোঁরাবাদের

বিষয়ে। এ পথ কিন্তু না গ্রহণ করতে হলেই মঞ্চল।

এই রবীন্দ্র শতাব্দীকী উপলক্ষে আরও দু' একটি দিকেও এখন দৃষ্টি দেওয়া প্রয়োজন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কলকাতায় জন্ম মৃত্যুও কলকাতায়। সেই কলকাতার পৌর-প্রতিষ্ঠানের নানা দায়িত্বের মধ্যে একটি দায়িত্ব কবির উদার মানসিকতার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা রেখে কবির মাতৃভাষা ও এ শহরের জন-গণের ভাষাকে যথাযোগ্য প্রতিষ্ঠা দান। কলকাতায় শুধু বাঙলা ভাষারাই থাকেন না এ কথাটি নিশ্চয়ই মনে রাখা দরকার। কিন্তু পৃথিবীর কোন্ মহানগরীতে শুধু একভাষী লোকই বাস করে? লওনে করে? নিউইয়র্কে করে? না, সাংহাই-তোকিওতে করে? অবশ্য ভারতীয় মহানগরী (কলকাতা, বোম্বাই, প্রভৃতি) সমূহের অবস্থা অন্যরূপ; কারণ ভারত যে বহু-ভাষিক রাষ্ট্র। বহু ভাষিক তাই এক অর্থে কলকাতা, বোম্বাই নয়াদিল্লী। কিন্তু তেমনি মত এই যে, একটি প্রধান সাধারণ ভাষা আছে কলকাতার। কলকাতার পৌর-প্রতিষ্ঠান নিশ্চয়ই ইংরেজি সম্পূর্ণ বর্জন করবেন না কারণ, কলকাতার বহুলোকের তা মাতৃভাষা। তথাপি বাঙলা ভাষাকে প্রাধান্য না দিলে কি করে তারা কলকাতার মানুষের প্রতিষ্ঠান হবেন? তাঁদের পৌর-সভার হাসি-কান্না হয়তো এখন প্রধানতঃ বাঙলাতেই হয়। কিন্তু তাই কি যথেষ্ট।

কী করা যায়—এ অবশ্য আজ এ প্রসঙ্গে আলোচ্য নয়। কিন্তু আমার প্রস্তাব এ নয় যে, আরও বেশি করে কলকাতার রাস্তার পুরাতন নাম বদলে বাঙালীর নাম তাতে জুড়ে দেওয়া হোক—বাঙলা হরফে। নতুন রাস্তার বেলা যাই হোক—পুরনো রাস্তার নাম বদলানো হচ্ছে ইতিহাসকে চিন্ন করা—যার দৃষ্টান্ত প্রিন্সেপ-এর নাম পাঠানো। আর 'আচার্য', 'বিপ্লবী' প্রভৃতি নামের পূর্বে জুড়ে রাস্তার নামটিকে দীর্ঘায়িত করে কি লাভ?—অবশ্য টেলিগ্রামের মাণ্ডল বাড়ে। শুধু 'নেতাজী' বা 'স্বভাষ' এর নাম শুনে যদি কেউ না বোঝে তা হলে নাম, 'নেতাজী' স্বভাষ চন্দ্র বোস্টাট, বললেই কি সে হতভাগা বেশি বুঝবে? তবে 'সরোবর' 'ময়দান' 'চহর' 'বাগ' 'বাগান', 'সরক', 'পথ', 'গলি' প্রভৃতি কথাগুলি অচল না হওয়াই ভালো।

কিন্তু আমার প্রস্তাব ওবিষয়ে নয়—আমেরিকার বহু শহরে বহুভাষা লোকদের ইংরেজি শিখিয়ে 'মাকিন' করে। কলকাতার পৌর-প্রতিষ্ঠান কি কলকাতার মতো শহরে কিছুটা বাঙলা প্রচারের চেষ্টা করতে পারেন না অন্য কোনো ভাষাকে কিছু-মাত্র আয়ত্ত না করে? বাঙলা জনশিক্ষার প্রতিষ্ঠান, প্রাথমিক বাঙলা শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা, এবং সিনেমায় অধিকতর বাঙলা চিত্রের ব্যবস্থা করা কি একেবারে দুঃসাধ্য। সিনেমার ব্যাপারে তো বলা যায়—অন্ততঃ শহরবাসীর রুচি নীতির দিক থেকেও বাঙলা চিত্র প্রচলন বাঞ্ছনীয়।

অমের লাগি মাঠে
লাঙলে মানুষ মানিতে ঝাঁড় কাটে;
কলমের মুখে ঝাঁড় কাটিয়া
খাতার পাতার তলে
মনের অম ফলে।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ

ধনী প্রাসাদ বিকট ক্ষুধিত রাহ
বস্ত্রপিণ্ড বোঝায় বন্ধবাহ।
মনে পড়ে সেই দাঁনের রিক্ত ঘরে
বাহ বিমুক্ত আলিঙ্গনের তরে ॥

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



মৃত্যু ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ

ডঃ বিজনবিহারী ভট্টাচার্য্য

যাহা ক্রমাগতই সংসরণ করিতেছে, চলিতেছে, স্থানুর মত এক স্থানে স্থির হইয়া থাকিতেছেন। তাহাই সংসার। কিন্তু এই যে চলা ইহা তো একমুখী নয়। শুধু যাওয়াও নয়, শুধু আসাও নয়—যাওয়া এবং আসা এই দুইয়ে মিলিয়াই জগৎ সংসার। জীবন মৃত্যু এখানে এক হইয়া বিরাজ করিতেছে। মরণ এ সংসারের অবিস্ফেদ অঙ্গ, তাহাকে পর করিয়া তুলিলে জীবনটীও খণ্ড ক্ষুদ্র হইয়া দেখা দিলে।

“মরণকে তুই পর করেচিস, ভাই,
জীবন যে তোর ক্ষুদ্র হ’লো ‘ভাই’।”

কিন্তু সাধারণ মানুষ এই মরণকে ভয় পায়, অসম মৃত্যুকে দরে সরাইয়া রাখিবার জন্য তাহার ব্যাকুলতার প্রহর নাহি। মানুষ যখন প্রাণিমাত্র তখন অন্যান্য প্রাণীরা যত্নে তাহার এইখানেই খুব বড় রকমের মিল। বৃক্ষ-লতার মত পশু-পক্ষীর মত তাহার প্রবল জিজ্ঞাসিকা। মৃত্যুর সাহিত তাহার অনন্ত সংগ্রাম। সন্নিবিষ্ট পরাজয় সত্ত্বেও সে সংগ্রামের শেষ নেই।

কবি মানুষকে প্রাণিলোক হইতে মহামানব লোকে উন্নীত করিতে চাহিয়াছেন। তিনি বলেন, “যারা কেবল প্রাণীমাত্র, মৃত্যু তাদের পক্ষে একান্ত মৃত্যু মানুষের জীবনে মৃত্যুই শেষ কথা নয়।

মানুষ যাহাকে শেষ মনে করে, তাহা তো শেষ নয়। সে শুধু কল্পনা মাত্র।

“শেষ নাহিয়ে শেষ কথা কে বলবে?”

বাহিরে যাহাকে অবসান বলিয়া বোধ হইতেছে, কাষতঃ তাহা অবসান নয়, তাহা নবরস্তুর সূচনা।

কুরায় বা তা কুরায় শুধু চোখে,
অন্ধকারের পেরিয়ে দুয়ার যায় চলে আলোকে।
পুরাতনের হৃদয় টুটে আপনি নূতন উঠবে ফুলে,
জীবনে ফুল ফোটা হলে মরণে ফল ফলবে।


সারা জীবন ধরিয়া যে সাধনা, মৃত্যুতে তাহাই সার্থক হইয়া উঠিলে। তাই মৃত্যুকে কেবল বিচ্ছেদ ভাবিয়া ভয় পাইলে চলিলে না। তবু লোকে ভয় পায়। সারা জীবন ধরিয়া মানুষ স্থূল উপকরণ সম্ভার সংগ্রহ করিয়া এই কল্পিত ফাঁকটুকু ভরাইবার জন্য প্রাণপাত পরিশ্রম করিয়া মরে! তাহার কারণ মৃত্যুর তত্ত্বটা সে ঠিকমত উপলব্ধি করিতে পারে না।

মৃত্যুটা হয় কাহার? আত্মার তো মৃত্যু নাই! আত্মা—

‘ন জায়তে ম্রিয়তে’ আত্মার জন্মও নাই মৃত্যুও নাই। মরে এই অংশটা, যাহার মধ্য দিয়া আত্মার প্রকাশ। আত্মার জন্ম মৃত্যু নাহি; কিন্তু আত্মার প্রকাশরূপ যে অংশ, সে জন্ম মৃত্যুর মধ্য দিয়া চলিয়াছে। কবি বলেন, “আত্মা --- চিরশ্রেণী নদীর মত। অনাদি তার উৎপত্তি শিখর, অনন্ত তার সঞ্চার ক্ষেত্র। --- এই আত্মা যে দেশ দিয়ে যে কাল দিয়ে চলেছে তার গতি-বেগে সেই দেশ ও সেই কালের মানা উপকরণ সম্বন্ধিত হয়ে তার একটি সংস্কাররূপ তৈরি হতে থাকে—এই জিনিষটি কেবলই ভাঙে, গড়ে, কেবলই আকার পরিবর্তন করছে। কিন্তু সৃষ্টি কোনো কোনো অবস্থায় সৃষ্টিকর্তাকে ছাপিয়ে উঠতে পারে। এমন হতে পারে অংশটিকেই তার স্থাপাকার উপকরণ সমেত দেখা যায়—আত্মাকে আর দেখা যায় না। অংশ চারিদিকেই বড় হয়ে উঠে আত্মাকে বলতে থাকে,—‘তুমি চলতে পারো না, তুমি এইখানে থেকে যাও; তুমি এই বনদোলতেই থাকো, এই খাতি প্রতিপত্তিতেই থাকো।’”

অংশের দ্বারা আত্মা যখন এইভাবে বেষ্টিত হইয়া পড়ে তখনই তাহার গতি ব্যাহত হয়, তাহার প্রবাহ অনন্তের দিক হইতে ঘুরিয়া বিপথে সঞ্চরণ করে। তথাপি অংশের প্রয়োজন আছে, এ কথা অস্বীকার করিলে চলিলে না। নদীর কূল তাহার বাধা বটে কিন্তু ঐ কূলই নদীর নদী স্বরক্ষা করে। কূল না থাকিলে বাধ ভাঙা বিক্ষিপ্ত বিপর্নস্ত জলরাশি বন্যায় আকারে বিপ্লুত হইয়া পড়ে। একাকার জলরাশির মধ্যে নদীর বেগবান প্রবাহ আপন গতিবেগ হারাষ্টয়া নিষ্ক্রিয় ভাব ধারণ করে। আমাদের আত্মার পক্ষেও ঐ কারণেই অংশ রূপ কূলের দরকার। কিন্তু কূল যদি দুই দিক হইতে আগাইয়া আসিতে থাকে এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত নদীর প্রবাহ পথেই বাধা হইয়া দাঁড়ায়—তখনই নদী আর নদী থাকে না, সে মজিয়া শুক চর হইয়া পড়ে। আত্মার ক্ষেত্রেও ঠিক তাই। অংশ রূপ কূল যখন আত্মার আনুগত্য না করিয়া নিজের প্রবাহ হইয়া উঠিতে থাকে তখন নিজেরও ব্যর্থ হয় এবং আত্মাকেও ব্যর্থ করে। আত্মার সীমা এই অংশ। আত্মার রূপও এই অংশ। আত্মা এই সীমার মধ্যে থাকিয়া এই রূপের মধ্যে থাকিয়া নিজেকে প্রকাশিত করিতেছে।

কিন্তু এই সীমা এবং রূপকে অর্থাৎ এই অংশকে যে মানুষ অত্যন্ত বড় করিয়া দেখেন মৃত্যু তাহাকে ভয় দেখাইতে পারে না। প্রাণের বাহন এই যে আমাদের দেহটা, ইহার জরা-মৃত্যু আছে, রোগ শোক আছে, দুঃখ তাপ, ক্ষতি-অপমান, বিরোধ বিষয় আছে। সংসারে এ সব অপরিহার্য। কিন্তু মর্ত্য প্রাণের এই অতিক্রম পরিষিটুকুর মধ্যেই তো মানুষের জীবন আবদ্ধ নহে। বুদ্ধির দৈন্য বশতঃ আমরা অনেক সময় আত্মার



IN GERMANY

জার্মানিতে



IN GERMANY (1926)

জার্মানিতে (১৯২৬)

প্রতি যথোচিত শ্রদ্ধা রাখিতে পারি না, কিন্তু মানুষকে সত্যকে জানিবার মত শক্তি যাহাদের আছে তাঁহারা বৈষয়িকতার মোহে এই বিপুল বিশ্ব হইতে নির্বাসিত নহেন। তাঁহাদের মৃত্যুশরী শক্তি এ সংসারের স্থূল উপকরণ সম্ভারের উদ্দেশ্যে উদ্বিগ্ন মানবাত্মারই জয়গান করে। তাঁহারা জানেন জীবনের মাঝখানে মৃত্যু যে বিচ্ছেদ আনে তাঁহা ছেদ নহে।

মৃত্যু জীবনে একটা ফাঁকের সৃষ্টি করে বটে, কিন্তু সে ফাঁক উপকরণের ফাঁক। যে মানুষ অহংটাকে বড় করিয়া দেখে এ ফাঁক তাঁহার পক্ষে দুঃস্থ। কিন্তু ভাবুক লোকে এই ফাঁকটাকে ফাঁক বলিয়া মনে করেন না। তাঁহারা এই ফাঁকের মধ্যে অনন্ত জীবনের অসীম ব্যাপ্তি লক্ষ্য করেন। কবি উপমা দিয়া বলিয়াছেন, “সাহিত্যে চিত্রকলায় ব্যঙ্গনাই রসের প্রধান আধার। এই ব্যঙ্গনার মানে কথাকে বিরল করে ফাঁকের ভিতর দিয়ে ভাবের ধারা বইয়ে দেওয়া। বাক্য ও অলঙ্কারের বিরলতার ভিতর দিয়ে যাঁরা ইঙ্গিতেই রসকে নিবিড় করেন তাঁরাই গুণী, আর যাঁদের ভাবুক দৃষ্টিতে সেই বিপুলতাই রসে পূর্ণরূপে প্রকাশ পায় তাঁরাই রসজ্ঞ।” মানবজীবনের মৃত্যুর দ্বারা যে ফাঁক হয় তাহা ভাবুকে দৃষ্টিতে মহত্তর জীবনের ব্যঙ্গনারূপেই প্রকাশিত হয়।

মৃত্যুকে যে আমরা ভয় করি সে কেবল অজ্ঞানার ভয়। শিশু রাত্রিকে ভয় করে; রাত্রির অন্ধকারে রাত্রির পরিচয় তাঁহার অগোচর। সে দিনটাকেই জানে, দিন তাঁহার কাছে প্রত্যক্ষ। দিনাবসানের সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই সে ভাবে সবই ঘুরা গেল। কবি বলেন, সব যায় না। আলোক অন্ধকার উভয়কে লইয়াই বিশ্ব। বরণীর ধূলা মাটি যেমন বিশ্বের অঙ্গ, অনন্ত আকাশ এবং উহার মধ্যবর্তী অসংখ্য জ্যোতিষ্কও তেমনি বিশ্বের অঙ্গ। রাত্রিতে অন্ধকারের কালো ফাঁকটা তাই ফাঁক নহে, নক্ষত্র লোকের অনন্ত জ্যোতির্ময় ব্যঙ্গনার একটা উপায় মাত্র। তাই কবি বলিতেছেন, “অন্ধকারের মধ্যে নিখিল বিশ্বের ব্যঙ্গনা যেমন, মৃত্যুর মধ্যেও পরম প্রাণের ব্যঙ্গনা তেমনি।”

জীবন অনন্ত অসীম; তাঁহার মধ্যে কোথাও ফাঁক নাই। ফাঁককে মানাই নাস্তিকতা। মাঝরাণ লোকে চোখে যেখানে ফাঁক দেখে মহাত্মারা সেইখানে পূর্ণকে দেখেন। এই বিশ্বের যিনি অধীশ্বর তিনি পূর্ণস্বরূপ। যিনি বিশ্বনাথকে অন্তরের মধ্যে গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন তাঁহার দৃষ্টিতে কোথাও ফাঁক থাকিতে পারে না। মানুষ মানুষে ফাঁক, জাতিতে জাতিতে ফাঁক, দেশে দেশে, রাষ্ট্রে-রাষ্ট্রে ভাষায় ভাষায় ফাঁক—অহংনিষ্ঠ মানুষ এই ফাঁকের ভারে পীড়িত। এ যে বলা হইয়াছে:

অয়ং নিজ পরো বেত্তি গণনা লঘুচেতসাম্।
উদারচরিতানাস্ত বস্তুধৈব কুটুমকম্।”

এ কথাটির অর্থ কি? অর্থ এই যে মহাত্মার কাছে মানুষে মানুষে কোনো ফাঁক নাই। সকল মানুষই এক মনুষ্যত্বের বন্ধনে আবদ্ধ বলিয়া তিনি কনে করেন। তাই পৃথিবীর সকল মানুষই তাঁহার আত্মীয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতে মহাত্মানবের এই পরিচয়। তাঁহাদের অন্তরাত্মা শূন্যকে অস্বীকার করেন। মৃত্যুকেও তাঁহারা শূন্য বলিয়া মানেন। মৃত্যুর মত অত বড় বিচ্ছেদের মধ্যেও তাঁহারা পূর্ণতার সন্ধান পান। তাঁহারা জানেন:

আলো আসে দিনে দিনে
রাত্রি নিয়ে আসে অন্ধকার।
মরণ সাগরে মিলে সাদা কালো গঙ্গা যমুনার ॥

অহংকে অন্যন্তর মধ্যে মিলাইয়া দিতে পারিলে এ সংসারের দুঃখ জ্বালার হাত হইতে সহজেই পরিত্রাণ পাওয়া যায়।

সংসারেতে দারুণ ব্যথা লাগায় যখন প্রাণে
“আমি যে নাই” এই কথাটিই মনটা যেন জানে।
যে আছে সে সকল কালের, এ কাল হতে ভিন্ন—
তাঁহার গায়ে লাগে না তো কোনো ক্ষতের চিহ্ন।

আজিকার অহংএর সহিত অতীতের অহং এবং অনাগত কালের অহং তখন এক হইয়া যায়। মৃত্যু তখন বিচ্ছেদ না আনিয়া যোগের সেতু হইয়া দাঁড়ায়। জীবনের শেষ যদি না থাকে তবেই তো মৃত্যুকে বিচ্ছেদ বলিয়া মানিব,—কিন্তু জীবনের শেষ তো কবি কখনও স্বীকার করেন নাই।

হার ওরে মানব হৃদয়,
বার বার
কারো পানে ফিরে চাখিবার
নাই যে সময়;
নাই নাই।
জীবনের খরযোতে ভাগিত সদাই
ভুবনের ঘাটে ঘাটে;—
এক ঘাটে লও বোঝা, শূন্য করে দাও অন্য ঘাটে।

কবি করনা করিতেছেন জীবন নদীর অনন্ত খরযোত বাহিয়া তিনিও যুগে যুগে ভুবনের ঘাটে ঘাটে নামিয়াছেন, আবার—
কেনা বেচা শেষ করিয়া অলঙ্কার উদ্দেশ্যে পাড়ি দিয়েছেন।
সে কথা আজও সময়ে সময়ে তাঁহার মনে পড়ে।

মনে আজ পড়ে সেই কথা—
যুগে যুগে এসেছি চলিয়া
অলিয়া অলিয়া
চুপে চুপে
রূপ হতে রূপে
প্রাণ হতে প্রাণে।
নিশীথে প্রভাতে
যা কিছু পেয়েছি হাতে
এসেছি করিয়া ক্ষয় দান হতে দানে,
গান হতে গানে ॥

এ দেহটিকে ভেলা করিয়া কবি দু দিনের জন্য জীবন নদীতে নামিয়াছেন। পারে পৌঁছিলেই নৌকা বাওয়া শেষ হইবে না। তখন আরম্ভ হইবে অজানা পথে আবার যাত্রা। জীবনের এই জানা কটা দিন কাটিয়ে গেলেই তখন অজ্ঞানার উদ্দেশ্যে কবি অভিযারে বাহির হইবেন।

এই দেহটির ভেলা নিয়ে দিয়েছি সাঁতার গো,
এই দুদিনের নদী হব পার গো।

তারপরে যেই ফুরিয়ে যাবে বেলা,
ভাগিয়ে দেব ভেলা।
তারপরে তার খবর কি যে পারিনে তার ধার গো,
তার পরে সে কেমন আলো কেমন অন্ধকার গো।

কবি তো শুধু তবুদর্শী নাহেন তিনি যে এই পৃথিবীর মানুষ।
পৃথিবীকে এমন একান্ত করিয়া কয়জন মানুষ ভালবাসিয়াছেন ?

আমি যে'লেসেছি ভালো এই জগতেরে ;
পাকে পাকে ঘোরে ফেরে
আমার জীবন দিয়ে জড়িয়েছি এরে ;
প্রভাত সন্ধ্যার
আলো অন্ধকার
মোর চেতনায় গেছে ভেসে ;
অবশেষে
এক হয়ে গেছে আজ আমার জীবন, আর
আমার ভুবন।
ভালোবাসিয়াছি এই জগতের আলো
জীবনেরে তাই বাসি ভালো।

যে পৃথিবীকে কবি এমন একান্ত করিয়া ভালবাসিয়াছেন তাঁহাকেও
একদিন ত্যাগ করিয়া যাইতে হইবে। মৃত্যু আসিয়া একদিন
তাঁহার এই এত সাধের—এত ভালবাসার পৃথিবী হইতে সরাইয়া
লইয়া যাইবে।

তবুও মরিতে হবে এও সত্য জানি।
মোর বাণী
একদিন এ বাতাসে ফুটিবে না
মোর ঝাঁপি এ আলোকে লুটিবে না,
মোর ছিঁয়া ঢুটাবে না
অন্ধেরে উদ্দীপ্ত আছবানে ;
মোর কানে কানে
রজনী কবে না তার রহস্যবাহরতা,
শেষ করে যেতে হবে শেষ দৃষ্টি, মোর শেষ কথা।
এমন একান্ত করে চাওয়া এও সত্য যত
এমন একান্ত চেড়ে যাওয়া সেও সেই মত।

তাত্ত্বিক ধর্মের অনাসক্তি অপেক্ষা মর্ত্য মানবের ব্যাকুলতাই
এই কয়েক ছত্রে অধিক প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। যাহাকে ভাল
বাসিয়াছি তাহাকে ছাড়িয়া যাইতে গেলে দু' ফোঁটা চোখের জল
যে ফেলে আমরা, সাধারণ মানুষ, তাহারই সঙ্গে অন্তরে মিল
খুঁজিয়া পাই। তাই চলিয়া যাইবার নামে কবির এই যে বিষমতা,
আমাদের মনকে ইহা সহজেই টানে। কিন্তু কবি বিষাদের
হাতেই শেষ পর্যন্ত আত্মসমর্পণ করিলেন না। তিনি আবার
সেই তত্ত্বের শরণাপন্ন হইলেন। বলিলেন,—

এ দুয়ের মাঝে তবু কোনোখানে আছে কোনো মিল,
নহিলে নিখিল
এত বড় নিসাক্ষণ প্রবঞ্চনা
হাসি মুখে এতকাল কিছুতে সহিতে পারিত না।

ইহা প্রমান নয়, অনুমান মাত্র। কিন্তু এই অনুমানের উপরেই
তাঁহাকে নির্ভর করিতে হইবে কারণ মৃত্যুকে ফাঁক বলিয়া কল্পনা

করিতে হইলে কবির স্বীয় অন্তরাঙ্গার সহিত বিদ্রোহ করিতে
হয়। মানব জীবনের পক্ষে এত বড় বিড়ম্বনাকে স্বীকার করা
তাঁহার পক্ষে অসম্ভব। তাই পরলোকগত প্রিয়তমার ছবির
দিকে তাকাইয়া যখন একবার মনে হইল ইহা স্থির রেখার বন্ধনে
বাঁধা চিত্র মাত্র তখনই অন্তর বিদ্রোহ করিয়া উঠিল :

কী প্রলাপ কহে কবি ?

তুমি ছবি ?

নহে নহে, নও শুধু ছবি।

কে বলে রয়েছ স্থির রেখার বন্ধনে

নিস্তব্ধ ক্রন্দনে ?

মরি মরি, সে আনন্দ খেমে যেত যদি

এই নদী

হারাত তরঙ্গবেগ ;

এই মেঘ

মুছিয়া ফেলিত তার সোনার লিখন।

সেই একই কথা—মৃত্যু হয় এই দেহটার, কিন্তু আত্মার মৃত্যু
নাই। আত্মার রাশ বরিয়া কোন এক সারথি যুগ যুগান্তর বরিয়া
ঘুরাইতেছেন। চলার পথে সে আর খামিতে পাইল না।

চলেচিস রে চলাচলের পথে

কোন সারথির উদ্বাও মনোরথে ?

নিমেঘ তরে যুগে—যুগান্তরে

দিবে না রাশ ঢিলা।

কাজেই ভাবনা করিয়া লাভ নাই। তবু দুঃখ হয়। দু'দিনের
জন্য বাসা বাঁধিলেও ছাড়িয়া যাইতে মন কেমন করে বই কি ?
তাই কবি বিদায় লওয়ার সময় দু' ফোঁটা চোখের জল না ফেলিয়া
পারেন না। আবার সঙ্গুখে যে প্রেমিক তাঁহার জন্য অপেক্ষা
করিয়া আছে, তাহার প্রতিও অনুরাগ কম নহে। বধু যখন
পিত্রালয় ছাড়িয়া প্রিয়তমের উদ্দেশ্যে যাত্রা করে এখন তাহারও
চোখে জল থাকে। কিন্তু পতির সহিত মিলনের আকাঙ্ক্ষায়
তাঁহার বক্ষ কি কম্পিত হয় না ? কবি সেই নবোন্মাদ বধুর মতই
বলিতেছেন :

এই জনমের এই রূপের এই খেলা

এবার করি শেষ ;

সন্ধ্যা হল ফুরিয়ে এল বেলা,

বদল করি বেশ।

যাবার কালে মুখ ফিরিয়ে পিছু

কান্না আমার ছড়িয়ে যাব কিছু

সামনে সেও প্রেমের কাঁদন উরা

চির নিরুদ্দেশ।

মরণ সাগর উত্তীর্ণ হইলেন তবে জীবনের চরম সার্থকতা।
কবি তাঁহার বিশাল সাহিত্যের মধ্যে বহুস্থানে এই তত্ত্বটি প্রচার
করিয়াছেন এবং নিজ জীবন দিয়া তাহা অনুভব করিয়াছেন।
মৃত্যু তাই তাঁহার কাছে বিভীষিকা নহে। মৃত্যু তাঁহার প্রেমাস্পদ।
তাই মরণকে তিনি শ্যাম সমান বলিয়া তাঁহার প্রতি অন্তরের
অনুরাগ প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। রাধার সুরে সুর মিশাইয়া তরুণ
কবি ডাক দিয়াছেন—

মরণ তু আওরে আও।

ইংরেজিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও এজরা পাউণ্ড

বিষ্ণু দে



রবীন্দ্রনাথ খুশিতে হেসে বলেছিলেন, এজরা পাউণ্ড, সে আমার ভারি ভক্ত ছিল, একেবারে পাগল, প্রায়ই আসত, সোফায় বসত না, পায়ের কাছে বসত, লিখেও ছিল আমার বিষয়ে।

কল্পনা করা যায়, লণ্ডনের বাগায় একদিন বছরের প্রৌঢ় রবীন্দ্রনাথ, পায়ের কাছে মাঝ পশ্চিমা আমেরিকান উদ্ভাস কবি ছাব্বিশ বছরের এজরা। সরোজিনী নাইডুর গল্প মনে পড়ে, হায়দ্রাবাদে নিজাম পাসাদে সফা চটায় বৃদ্ধ রবীন্দ্রনাথ, পায়ের কাছে ফরাঙ্গী শিক্ষিত তুর্কী স্তলতান কন্যা নিজামের পুত্রবধূ কবির দিকে মুখ তুলে তাকিয়ে থেকে থেকে বলছেন, ইউ আর বিউটিফুল। কয়েকবার এ কথা শোনার পর পশ্চিমগামী সূর্যের দিকে ধ্যানমগ্ন কবি মুখ নামিয়ে বললেন, ইউটু আর বিউটিফুল।

এজরা পাউণ্ড অবশ্য তাঁর প্রথম উচ্চাঙ্গ অচিরেই কান্নিয়ে ওঠেন, যেমন ওঠেন উইলিয়াম বটলর ইএটস্। কারণ প্রায় একই। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ইংরেজি রচনায় জমেই ভাবের দিকে, আধ্যাত্মিকতার দিকে ঝাঁক পড়েছিল; বাঙলায় তাঁর যে অসামান্য কবিপ্রতিভা বিচিত্ররূপে নানা কবিতায় কাব্যশরীর পায়, সেই কাব্যশরীর এই সব ইংরেজি ভাবানুবাদে বড়োই অশরীরী হয়ে ওঠে। ইংরেজ পাঠকরা তাই অল্পকালের মধ্যেই পুনর্বিচার করতে আরম্ভ করেন। পাউণ্ডের ১৯১২-এর ভক্তিশীঘ্রই ঔদাসীন্যে দাঁড়ায়। তবু বলতে হবে ইএটসের ঘোর অবজ্ঞার রেশ বোধ হয় পাউণ্ডে পাওয়া যায় না। ১৯১২ সালে পাউণ্ড হ্যারিএট মনরোকে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা পাঠান, লেখেন ভেরি গ্রেট বেঙ্গলি পোএট, রবীন্দ্রনাথ টাগোর, অনুবাদকে বলেন, ভেরি বিউটিফুল ইংলিশ প্রোস, উইথ মাষ্টারি অফ কেডেন্স।

১৯১৩ সালের জানুয়ারিতেই পাউণ্ড চক্ষুস্ফূর্ত বা সাবালক হয়ে উঠেছেন। তখন রাজা পঞ্চম জর্জের জন্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ ক্লিরকমভাবে গান লেখেন, ভারতীয় ছাত্র কর্তৃক তার কাছিনী পাউণ্ড মহাকৌতুকে স্নায় পিতৃদেবকে লিখছেন। এপ্রিল মাসের চিঠিতে পাউণ্ড কয়েকটি কথা লেখেন, যার সমালোচনা মূল্য অনেক বিস্তৃত প্রবন্ধের চেয়ে বেশি। সম্প্রতি 'দেশ' পত্রিকায় এমনি একটি প্রবন্ধ পড়বার সৌভাগ্য হল, তাতে পণ্ডিতপ্রবর শিবনারায়ণ রায় মহাশয় রবীন্দ্রনাথের পুনর্বিচার চেষ্টায় যে অন্যায় করেছেন, সে বিষয়ে কিছু বলার প্রয়োজন নেই। শুধু আমাদের অনেক সময়ে অসর্তকতার বশে কি রকম ভুল হয়, তার একটি উদাহরণ দিই। শিবনারায়ণবাবু ভুলে গেছেন যে, রবীন্দ্রনাথের গানের সঙ্গে জার্মান সুরকারদের তুলনাই হয় না, কারণ তাঁরা কথা ও সুর অর্ধনারীশ্বর রবীন্দ্র-গীতির রচয়িতা নন।

পাউণ্ডের এই সমালোচনাটুকু তার স্বকীয়তার জন্য মূল ইংরেজিতেই উদ্ধৃত করি:

God knows I didn't ask for the job of correcting Tagore. He asked me to. Also it will be very difficult for his defenders in London if he takes to printing anything except his best work. As a religious teacher he is superfluous. We've got Lao Tse. And his (Tagore's) philosophy hasn't much in it for a man who has 'felt the pangs' or been pestered with Western civilisation. I don't mean quite that, but he isn't either Villon or Leopardi, and the modern demands just a dash of their insight. So long as he sticks to poetry he can be defended on stylistic grounds against those who disagree with his content. And there's no use his repeating the Vedas and other stuff that has been translated. In his original Bengali he has the novelty of rime and rhythm and of expression, but in a prose translation it is just 'more theosophy' course if he wants to set a lower level than that which I am trying to set in my translations from Kabir, I can't help it. It's his own affair.

১৯১৭ সালে পাউণ্ড লেখেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের নোবেল পুরস্কার পাওয়ার রহস্য বিষয়ে একটি মজার চিঠি। এলেক এরনসনের "পশ্চিমার চোখে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর" নয় বরাদেব পড়া তাঁরা অবশ্য এই রহস্যের কাছিনী জানেন।

Tagore got the Nobel Prize because, after cleverest boom of our day, after the fiat of omnipotent literati of distinction, he lapsed into religion and optimism and was boomed by the pious non-conformists. Also because it got the Swedish Academy out of the difficulty of deciding between European writers whose claims appeared to conflict. (Sic.) Hardy or Henry James?

Tagore obviously was unique in the known modern Orient. And then, the right people suggested him. And Sweden is Sweden. It was also a damn good smack for the British Academic Committee, who had turned down Tagore (on account of his biscuit complexion) and who elected in his stead to their august corpse, Alice Meynell and Dean Inge.

Therefore his Nobel Prize gave pleasure unto the elect.

১৯৩৯ সালের এক চিঠিতে পাউণ্ডের উদগার পাওয়া যায় তারতম্য বিষয়ে।

হয়তো বা উজির জালে পড়লে পরে মানুষ এইভাবে নিজেকে বার করবার চেষ্টা করে; ভাবে, না হলে যে “লায়েক” বা সাবালক হতে পারছে না। কিন্তু ১৯১২-র শেষে পাউণ্ডের প্রবন্ধটি তৎসমুদ্রে ও বিস্ময়কর লাগে, তাঁর চোখ কানের প্রথরতর প্রমাণ হিসাবে। তাড়াতাড়ি পাউণ্ড বা ইএটসের মতো তীক্ষ্ণবী কবি-সমালোচকদের কথা আমাদের অনেক কিছু বিষয়ে ভাবতে পারে। তার মধ্যে একটি হচ্ছে ইংরেজি চেহারা রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাঁটির অসম্পূর্ণতা, তাঁর কবিত্ব-শক্তির প্রবলতা এবং তাঁর চারিত্র্য এই অনুবাদে প্রায় চাপা পড়ে আছে, আধ্যাত্মিক আবেদনের বিষয়ে একটা সাময়িক ধারণার জের ইংরেজিতে রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার প্রকাশকে বাহ্যত করে। কর্তৃপক্ষের উচিত রবীন্দ্র-রচনার নূতন মানের অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা।

পাউণ্ডের প্রবন্ধটিতে তিনি লেখেন:

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়ের কবিতাবলীর প্রকাশ আমার মতে একটা বিশেষ সমরণীয় ঘটনা। জানি না পাঠকদের একথা বোঝাতে পারব কি না। আমার কথার প্রমাণ অবশ্য কবিতাগুলিই। এ কবিতা পড়তে হবে আগুে আগুে, নিঃস্বন্দ শান্তিতে চোঁচিয়ে। কারণ এর ইংরেজি অনুবাদ লিখেছেন একজন বিরাট সঙ্গীতকার, একজন ওস্তাদ শিল্পী যার কারণে আমাদের চেয়ে অনেক শূন্য স্কুয়ার সঙ্গীত নিয়ে।

এক মাস হয়ে গেল, শ্রীযুক্ত ইএটসের ঘরে গিয়ে দেখলুম তাঁকে মহা উত্তেজিত এক মহাকবির আবির্ভাবে, আমাদের সকলের চেয়ে মহত্তর এক কবি।

কোথায় আরম্ভ করব ভাবছি। বাংলাদেশে পাঁচকোটি লোক। বাইরে থেকে মনে হয় রেলগাড়িতে আর গ্রামোফোনে এ জাতটা বৃষ্টি ডুবছে। কিন্তু এর তলায় আছে একটা সংস্কৃতি, যার সঙ্গে তুলনীয় বিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রভূ।

ঠাকুরমশায় এদের মহাকবি আর মহাসঙ্গীতকারও বটে। ইনি এদের জাতীয় সঙ্গীত দিয়েছেন, মার্শে-এ-এর সঙ্গে তুলনীয় প্রাচ্যশোভন গান। তাঁর সোনার বাংলা আমি শুনেছি। তার স্বর সম্পূর্ণ প্রাচ্য, কিন্তু অদ্ভুত তার জাদু, ভিত্তিকে মাতাবার মতো। এ গানটা জাতে সীমাবদ্ধ, ঠুঁরী জাতের, ব্যক্তিগত কিন্তু কর্মোদ্দীপনায় পূর্ণ।

প্রগড়ত ও কথাটা বললুম। এতে এই প্রমাণ হয় যে, দাস্তে-কথিত তিনটি মহাকাব্যের বিষয়ই রবীন্দ্রনাথের আয়ত্তে: প্রেম, জাতীয় বা যুদ্ধ, আর আত্মিক মায়াব্রা।

মধ্যযুগের আরেকটা গুণও লক্ষ্য করা যায় এখানে। ঠাকুর-মশায় বহু লোককে তাঁর গান শোখান, তারা জুঁগলোরের মতো বাংলায় সেই গান চড়িয়ে বেড়ায়। জুবাদুরদের মতো তিনিও গর্ব করতে পারেন, এসব আমারই রচনা কথায় ও স্বরে এবং তিনি নিজেই যে এসব গান করেন তা আমি জানি, কারণ আমি শুনেছি।

এ কবিতার বাংলা কাব্যরূপ খানিকটা প্রভুসাল কানৎসোনি আর প্রুইয়াড়দের গাথা, বঁদেল ইত্যাদির মাঝামাঝি। মিলের ব্যবহার অন্য রকম, বাংলাতে চার অক্ষর বা স্বরবৃত্তের মিল পাওয়া যায়, যা লেওনি বা মধ্যযুগের অন্ত মধ্য মিলান্ত ঘটমাত্রিক শ্লোকের চেয়েও সূক্ষ্ম ও কঠিন।

বাংলা ছন্দবৃত্ত পশ্চিমের মধ্যে মুক্ত-ছন্দের সবচেয়ে আধুনিক বিকাশের সঙ্গেই তুলনীয়। ভাষাটিও সংস্কৃতজ। এর আওয়াজ আমার কানে শুদ্ধ গ্রীক ভাষার সবচেয়ে কাছাকাছি লাগে।

বাংলাভাষা বিভক্তিমূলক, তাই এতে মিল সহজ। গ্রীক বা জার্মানের মতো বাংলাতে সমাস বা সন্ধি চলে। ঠাকুরমশায় বললেন, তিনি এর ব্যবহার প্রায় সব কবিতাতেই করেন।

এসব দিয়ে দেখাতে চাই যে বাংলা ভাষা কবিতার সহায়, এর তারল্য এবং বাকরণের নমনীয়তা য় শব্দে সার্থক তীক্ষ্ণতা আনা যায়। এ ভাষায় কথার পারস্পর্য এদিক-ওদিক করা যায়, ইংরেজির মতো অর্থের গোলমাল না করে।

ঠিক মানোটা, ধারালো সার্থকতা এতে সহজ, কারণ প্রত্যেক বস্তুই প্রায় স্বতন্ত্র নামশব্দ পাওয়া যায়। উদাহরণত ইংরেজিতে বলি স্কার্ফ, ঠাকুরমশায়ের গান শোনাতে শোনাতে অনুবাদে কথটা এসেছিল, কিন্তু বাংলায় স্কার্ফ এক বস্তু নয়, যথা অক্ষল ও উত্তরীয় বা কোঁচার খুঁটি।

এ বই-এর শাখানেক কবিতা সবই প্রায় গান। স্বর আর কথা এখানে অঙ্গাঙ্গী এবং প্রাচ্যের সঙ্গীত এ বিষয়ে বিশেষ শোভন মনে হয়। প্রথমত এখানে ধারমণির বিভ্রম না নেই। দ্বিতীয়ত, গ্রীক মোডুস-এর মতো রাগ-রাগিণীর ব্যাপারটাও সাধারণ করে। কারণ এই রাগিণীতে ভাবানুঘট জাগে, ফলে বাঙালী শ্রোতা প্রথম চরণ শুনেই কবিতার স্থানিকালপাত্র বিষয়ে নিশ্চিত হতে পারে।

রাগ-রাগিণীর রূপ ও ব্যবহার সঙ্গতি আমার তো মনে হয় ভারী কার্যকর। অতঃপর এতে কবিতা বা গানে একটা ধর্মানুষ্ঠানিক আচারমূলক শক্তি আসে এবং একটা বিশেষ কবিতা বা গান একটা স্বয়ম্ভু খাপছাড়া ব্যাপারও থাকে না, গানের ও জীবনের একটি সর্বগ্রাণী সম্পূর্ণতার অংশমাত্র হয়। তাই এ গানে মানুষ ব্যক্তিত্বের গভী থেকে সহজে মুক্তি পেয়ে একটা প্রবহমানতায়, বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির সম্পূর্ণতায়, যথাযথ বিধিবদ্ধ এক শান্তিতে হাঁক ছেড়ে বাঁচে।

লেখকমশায় বলেন, “জানি না এতে আরো কিছু আছে কিনা, আমাদের কাছে এর মূল্য সমধিক, কিন্তু সে হয়তো অনুঘর্ষে।” আগের সন্ধায় তিনি আমায় জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন, “তোমরা এই অনুবাদে কি পাও? ইওরোপীয়কে টানবে বলে কখনো ভাবিনি।”

আশ্চর্যই বা কি যে ঠাকুরমশায় বিদেশী ভাষায় গদ্যে তাঁর কবিতায় কি বাকি থাকে তাই ভাবেন; মূলের আত্মিক সৌন্দর্য, স্বর, ছন্দ, মিলের সূক্ষ্ম মিশ্রণ এ সবই তো অনুবাদে বাদ পড়েছে।

আমি বোধ হয় তাঁর দিক থেকে সময় নষ্ট করেছি, কারণ আমি তাঁর কবি-মানস ও বক্তব্য ছেড়ে তাঁর শিল্প ও প্রকাশভঙ্গী নিয়েই আলোচনা আরম্ভ করলুম।

তাঁর ভাষায় যথার্থ্য রইল। শুধু মাত্র চোখে পড়লে তাঁর ইংরেজি গদ্যের গতি এড়িয়ে যাবে। চোঁচিয়ে, একটু দ্বিধাম্বিত চালে পড়লেই কিন্তু ছন্দের স্ফুমা ও সৌকর্য্য স্পষ্ট হয়। এই ছন্দসৌভাগ্য, আমার বিশ্বাস, চৈতন্যের গভীরে ঘটেছে এটা আকস্মিক নয়। দীর্ঘকাল শব্দ-স্বরায়ণের পরে কোনো এরকম গদ্যছন্দ ব্যবহার করতে পারেন। নিজের অজ্ঞাতসারেও তিনি শব্দের বেষ্টুরো যোজনা করতে পারেন না।

তারপর যেটা সবচেয়ে সহজে চোখে পড়ে সেটা হচ্ছে মধ্যে মধ্যে জলজলে কথা পাওয়া যায়,—কখনো বা তাতে হেলেনিক শুদ্ধি, কখনো বা দ’ওরমৌ বা বদলেয়ের চরম বৈদধ্য।

কিন্তু এর ভিতরে আর একে ঘিরে আছে একটা বিচিত্র শাস্ত স্থিরতা। হঠাৎ আমরা খুঁজে পেলুম আমাদের নতুন গ্রীস। রেনেসান্স-এর সময়ে ইউরোপে যেমন সামন্তসাম্রাজ্য ফিরে এল, তেমনি আমার মনে হয় যে আজকের এই যন্ত্রের বিষম হটগোলে আমাদের মধ্যে এল এই একটা স্বস্তির শীতলতা।

অভিগির নীতি—স্বস্ত শরীরে স্বস্ত মন, মধ্যযুগের বিড়ম্বিত চিন্তাধারাকে এর চেয়ে বেশি মুক্ত করতে পারেনি।

এসব কথা হঠাৎ বলছি, আবেগের মাথায় বা একটা বড়ো কথার ঝাঁক। এ বিষয়ে মাসাধিক কাল ভেবেছি।

এখনো ঠাকুরমশায়ের অনন্যদিত অন্যান্য রচনা সম্বন্ধে বলবার সময় আসেনি। যে বইটি সামনে রয়েছে, তার সঙ্গে তুলনায় আমার জানা একটা বইই শুধু মনে পড়ছে, দাস্তুর পারাডিসো।

Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori (এ দেখ! আমাদের প্রেমগুলি যিনি বিকশিত করেন)

দাস্তুর চতুর্থ স্বর্গে ঢুকে সহস্রাব্দিক আত্মার এই গান শোনেন। অবশ্য ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের কণ্ঠস্বর অন্য রকম, তার অতীন্দ্রিয় ভক্তি ততটা আবেগময় নয়, বরং শান্ত। এরকম কথা—Poiche fur gioconde della faccia di dio (যেহেতু ঈশ্বরের মুখশ্রীতে এদের আনন্দ)

প্রাচ্যের স্তব্ধতা ভেঙে দেবে বলেই মনে হয়।

বোধ হয় “স্বর্গের নোমাডিয়া গোলাপের মতোই অস্বস্তিকূট,” এই দিব্যচিত্রই রবীন্দ্রনাথের মানস লোকের চাঁবি।

তাঁর মধ্যে প্রকৃতির স্তব্ধতা সমাধিত। কবিতাগুলি মানসিক বাধা বা অধিকাণ্ডে তৈরি নয় বলে মনে হয়, মনে হয় তাঁর মনের স্বাভাবিক অভ্যাসই এইরকম। প্রকৃতিতে তিনি মিল পেয়েছেন, সেখানে তাঁর কাছে কোনো বৈষম্য বা বিরোধ নেই। প্রতীচ্য-রীতির সঙ্গে এইখানে তাঁর দারুণ তফাৎ, “মহৎ নাসিক” আমরা লিখতে পারি মানুষ আর প্রকৃতির স্বন্দেহ বিধেই। মানুষ দেবতাদের হাতের পুতুল মাত্র, এবং কি দেবতা কি মানুষ উভয়েই ভাগ্যের ক্রীতদাস, এই হেলেনিক ধারণা এর বিপরীত।

ছ’ মাস আগে আমি রেনেসান্সের মানস প্রসঙ্গে লিখেছিলাম মানুষ মানুষ নিয়েই জড়িত, ভুলে যায় সমগ্রকে, প্রবচমানকে। ফলে আমরা পাই প্রথমে নাসিকার যুগ, তারপরে গদ্যের।

এ জাতের মানবতা বাদ আজ হোতা হারিয়ে শুকনো, মনে হয় বাংলা থেকে বুঝি তার সংশোধন ও এল।

প্রমাণ করতে পারব না। মহৎ স্বষ্টির পাঁচি সমালোচনা মাত্রই প্রমাণ করার চেয়ে ব্যক্তিগত স্বীকারোক্তিতেই সার্থক।

আজ শ্রাবণ-ষণ গহন মোহে গোপন তব চরণ ফেলে
নিশার মতো নীরব ওছে সবার দিগি এড়ায়ে এলে ॥

একশোটির একটা গান এটি, ইংরেজিতে এর রঁদেল রূপও নেই, উন্মত্তা, স্বকুমার সুরও নেই। ছন্দোবৃত্তের কথাটা ভাবো, প্রথম শব্দে গলার তীব্রতা, তারপরে তিন চারটি স্বরে তারই রেশ টানা, টুকেইকের চেয়ে দীর্ঘ ছন্দোবৃত্তে।

উষ্ণতার জন্যে যে কবিতাই তুলি, পরেরটা পড়ে ভাবি বুঝি ভুল করলুম। হয়তো সরল স্বীকারোক্তি সবচেয়ে ভালো সমালোচনা। ঠাকুর মশায়ের ব্যক্তিস্বরূপের সঙ্গে তাঁর রচনা মেশাতে চাই না, কিন্তু এক্ষেত্রে দুই-এর সম্পর্কে এত নিকট যে,

আমি দুটো কথা বলব কিছু ব্যাখ্যা না করেই সোজাসুজি।

ঠাকুর মশায়ের কাছ থেকে যখন বেরিয়ে আসি, তখন নিজেকে মনে হয় যেন একটা বর্ষা, পরনে জানোয়ারের ছাল, হাতে পাখরের অস্ত্র, মোটা ভারি কাঁটাওয়ালা অস্ত্র।

একটা ঘটনা থেকে হয়তো কিছুটা বোঝা যাবে, হয়তো কিরকম প্রায় স্থিতি তাঁর কবিতায় ঢড়িয়ে আছে। ঠাকুরমশায় সোফায় বসে, বাংলা থেকে পড়ে আনায় শোনাচ্ছেন, এমন সময়ে বাড়ির কত্থীর তিন বছরের মেয়ে ঘরে ঢুকে ভীষণ হাসতে আর গোলমাল করতে লাগল। কবি তন্দ্রুনি হো হো করে হেসে উঠলেন, ঠিক শিশুর সুরেই।

তিনি কি হঠাৎ শিশুর উল্লাসে তার সঙ্গে এক হয়ে গেলেন? না, এ কি প্রাচ্য ভদ্রতা? অথবা এটা কি সোজাসুজি স্বীকার যে বিশ্বের সৌন্দর্যতত্ত্বের আলোচনা আর শিশুর স্ফুটি একই ঢকে পড়ে?

তাই তোমার আনন্দ আমার 'পর
তুমি তাই এসেচ নীচে।

এ কবিতাগুলিকে বৌদ্ধভাবাপন্ন ভাবলে, বৌদ্ধবর্ন সম্বন্ধে আমাদের চলতি পারনা বদলে যাবে। কারণ এতে সেই তথাকথিত নেতিবাদ তো নেই, এ কবিতাগুলি পূর্ণ গ্রহণের আলোকে।...

সংক্ষেপে, এ কবিতাগুলিতে আমি পাই একটা চরম আন্তিক ইতিভাষণে। প্রত্যক্ষ শুভবুদ্ধি, যাতে করে আমাদের পাশ্চাত্য জীবনের বিশৃঙ্খলায়, শব্দের গোলমালে, কলে তৈরি সাহিত্যের কোলাহলে, বিজ্ঞানের ঘূর্ণিতে যে সব জিনিস চাপা পড়ে যায়, তাই আবার চোখে পড়ে।

যদি কোনো দোষ থাকে, তাহলে কবিতাগুলির সাধুভাবই হয়তো জনসাধারণের পক্ষে দোষ বলে গণ্য হবে। আমি অবশ্য তা মানি না। আমার তো করুণাই জাগে যখন দেখি কোনো পাঠক লোকে না যে, এ সাধুতা বা ভক্তি দাস্তুর মতো কবিতাজ্ঞ ভক্তি এবং স্বন্দর।

সোনালি রূপালি সবুজে স্তম্ভল
সে এমন মায়া কেমনে বুঝিলে,
তারি সে আড়ালে চরণ বাড়ালে
ডুবালে সে স্বধা-সরসে।

যেদিন ফুল কমল কিছু জানি নাই
আমি ছিলাম অনমনে।

আজকে শুধু একান্তে আগুন
চোখে চোখে চেয়ে থাকার দিন,
আজকে জীবনসমর্পণের গান
গাব নীরব অবসরে।

এই প্রশান্তিই দেখি মৃত্যুর কবিতাগুলিতে:

এবার তোরা আমার যাবার বেলাতে
সবাই জয়ধ্বনি কর।

অনেকদিন ছিলাম প্রতিবেশী
দিয়েছি যত নিয়েছি তার বেশি।

জুইনবর্নের কবিতার আবহাওয়া অবশ্য ঠাকুরের কবিতা
থেকে একেবারে আলাদা—ঠাকুর মশায় সত্যই বলতে পারেন—

আমার এ গান ছেড়েছে তার সকল অলঙ্কার ;
তোমার কাছে রাখেনি আর মাজের অহঙ্কার।

নিচক স্বার্থে আমি গীতাঞ্জলির সমাদর চাই। ঠাকুর
মশায়ের এছাড়াও অনেক রচনা আছে, নাটক, প্রেমের কবিতা
ইত্যাদি। শিশুর কবিতা তিনি অনুবাদ করেছেন, কবে বেরোবে
আগ্রহে ভাবছি।

সমালোচনায় যখন কূল পাওয়া যায় না, তখন সমালোচা
রচনার মূল্য সম্বন্ধে নিজেদেরই ব্যক্তিগতভাবে জমা রাখতে হয়।

কত অজানারে জানাইলে তুমি
কত ঘরে দিলে, ঠাঁই,
দূরকে করিলে নিকট বন্ধু
পরকে করিলে ভাই ॥

গুরুদেব

অমেয় প্রতিভার অধিশালায়
শিল্পরাজি অধিতীতম।
শব্দে রাঙা ছবি তার।
বর্ণালীর খেলা তার,
চন্দিত রেখা তার, নৃত্য চিত্তাময়।

পংক্তি দর্শন-কটি
ভাব ভাস্কর্য।
স্বপ্ন-গেহকারক,
নীরবতার বানীদাতা,
উন্মোচন করে সে
মৃত্যু-নারীর ভাস্ত্র মুখ।

—আঁদ্রে কারপালা
অনুবাদ—গঞ্জয় ভট্টাচার্য

একথা ঠাকুরমশায় নিজের লেখার বিষয়ে খুবই বলতে
পারেন, সব মহৎ শিল্পেই দূরের লোক বন্ধুতায় ঘনিষ্ঠ হয়ে ওঠে।
পরস্পরের শ্রদ্ধা এতে বাড়ে, অর্থবিজ্ঞানের শাস্তি-প্রস্তাবের চেয়ে
এরকম হিম্মৎ কথার অনেক বেশি।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এই কবিতা দিয়ে স্বদেশ সেবার চরম
করলেন। তিনি তাঁর দেশের পররাষ্ট্র বিভাগের শ্রেষ্ঠ দূত।

তাঁর কবিতার সৌন্দর্য স্পষ্টতই প্রাচ্যের, কিন্তু সংহত কঠিন।
অধিকাংশ দক্ষিণ প্রাচ্যের শিল্পের অতিপ্রাচুর্য এতে নেই, আমাদের
মন এতে বাহ্যত হয় না। তাঁর রচনা শাস্ত্র বীর রৌদ্রদীপ্ত,
বসন্তময়।.....একটি কবিতা উদ্ধৃত করে আমার কাজ শেষ, এর
পরে বলব বইটি পড়তে।

গোধূলিতে দুটি নয়ন কালো
ক্ষণেকতরে আমার মুখে তুলে
যে কছিল, ভাসিয়ে দেব আলো
দিনের শেষে তাই এসেছি কূলে।
চেয়ে দেখি দাঁড়িয়ে কাশের বনে
প্রদীপ ভেসে গেল অকারণে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ

ওঠে তার শিবের কাঠিন্য। যুগা বিষম ভুরুতে
কৈলাগের নীলকণ্ঠ স্মৃতি। শান্ত পূর্বী সন্ধিতে
প্রশস্ত ললাটি তার ঈষৎ কুঞ্চিত দীর্ঘ বয়সের শীতে ॥

চোখে তার খুঁটির তপগা। ধুলো মেখে পথ কেটে
যারা গেল, যারা এলো, সংগী তার। রিক্ত ধূ ধূ মাঠে
ফসলের দিন তার স্বপ্ন নিয়ে ধ্রুব নক্ষত্রের মত হাঁটে ॥

একদিন কোমল ছিল হয়ত সে স্বয়ং বরানুত,
গৌরীকে জড়িয়ে। সেই কিশলয় শোভা আজ গত,
এবন শরীর তার ভুয়ারের শান্তি, শুল্ল জ্ঞানভারে গত ॥

সর্বাংগ হিমালী তার। সূর্যাস্ত ও সূর্যোদয়ে জ্বলে
প্রেমের প্রস্তুত। দ্বিধ সাধনার একনিষ্ঠ অনলে
আজ তার পরিশুদ্ধ ভগীরথ স্তোত্র, হিম গিরিশীর্ষে গলে ॥

—জুলিয়ান হাক্সলী
অনুবাদ—বীরেন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও বিশ্ববোধ

মনোজ বসু



বিশ্ববোধ ভারতীয় চিন্তায় চিরকাল ধরে বর্তমান। মানবিক সকল সাধনার মধ্যে উপনিষদ একে প্রধানতম বলে আখ্যাত করেছেন। ভারত নরশ্রেষ্ঠ বলে বরণ করেছে ঋষিদের। ঋষিদের প্রধান লক্ষণঃ

তে সর্বং সর্বতঃ প্রাপ্য ধীরা
যুক্তাঙ্গানঃ সর্বমেবাদিশস্তি।

তঁারা পরমাত্মাকে সর্বত্র হতে প্রাপ্ত হয়ে ধীর হয়েছেন, সকলের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়েছেন, সকলের মধ্যে প্রবেশ করেছেন। বিশ্ব-মানবের সঙ্গে যোগ উপলব্ধি করা এবং শত্রু হোক মিত্র হোক উচ্চ হোক নীচ হোক সকলকে আপন করে নেওয়ার মধ্যেই, উপনিষদের মতে, মনুষ্যদের সার্থকতা। প্রতিদিনের ধ্যানমগ্ন গায়ত্রীর মধ্যে এই সর্বানুভূতিরই চর্চা—ভুলোকের সঙ্গে নক্ষত্র-লোক বাইরের সঙ্গে অন্তর ঈশ্বরের সঙ্গে সর্বভূত একত্র মিলিয়ে সন্দর্শন। বুদ্ধদেব এই বোধেরই পরিপূর্ণতা সাধনের জন্য পদ্ধতি দান করেছেন—যাতে মানুষের মন অহিংসা থেকে দয়ায় দয়া থেকে মৈত্রীতে সর্বত্র প্রসার লাভ করে। বুদ্ধমতে মৈত্রী কেবল একটি হৃদয়ের ভাব নয়—একটি বিশ্ব-সত্য। যেমন সত্য এই আকাশের আলোক। সম্রাট অশোক বিশ্ববোধে প্রবুদ্ধ হয়েই বললেন, সর্বে মুনিশ পজ্জা মম। পজ্জা (প্রজা)-র অর্থ সন্তান। সকল মানুষই তাঁর সন্তান। ভুবনব্যাপ্ত সেই সন্তানদের মধ্যে রাজধি অশোক শ্রেষ্ঠ গুণীজনীদের শাস্তি প্রেম ও আনন্দের দৌত্যে পাঠালেন। পরবর্তীকালে বাদশাহ আকবর এলাহি ধর্ম-বিস্তারে যত্নবান হলেন, তারও মূলসত্য ওই—মূলহ্-এ-মুল, প্রেম সকলের জন্য।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের পিতা মহাশি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের জীবন-প্রেরণা উপনিষদের মহাবর্ণী। পিতামহ দ্বারকানাথ কালাপানি পার হয়ে ইংলণ্ড ও ফ্রান্স পরিভ্রমণ করে বিশ্বমানবের প্রত্যক্ষ স্বাদ গ্রহণ করেন। দ্বারকানাথের পূর্বে বিশিষ্ট বাঙালি হিন্দু একজন মাত্র সাগর পেরিয়ে ইয়োরোপ গিয়েছিলেন—তিনি রামমোহন রায়। রামমোহনকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর জীবনের আদর্শপুরুষ (Hero of the life) বলে মানা করতেন। বলেছেন, “তিনি মনুষ্যত্বের ভিত্তির উপরে ভারতবর্ষকে সমস্ত পৃথিবীর সঙ্গে মিলিত করিবার জন্য একাকী দাঁড়াইয়াছিলেন। কোনো প্রথা কোনো সংস্কার তাঁহার দৃষ্টিকে রুদ্ধ করিতে পারে নাই। আশ্চর্য উদার হৃদয় ও উদার বুদ্ধির দ্বারা তিনি পূর্বকে পরিত্যাগ না করিয়া পশ্চিমকে গ্রহণ করিতে পারিয়াছিলেন। আমাদেরকে জানিতে দিয়াছেন, আমরা সমস্ত পৃথিবীর, আমাদেরই জন্য বুদ্ধ বীস্ট মহম্মদ জীবন গ্রহণ ও জীবন দান করিয়াছেন।”

দেবেন্দ্রনাথ শিশু-রবীন্দ্রনাথকে কোনো বিধিবদ্ধ শিক্ষার নিগড়ে বাঁধতে চান নি। পিতার সম্বন্ধে কবি বলছেন, “তাঁহার উপদেশ হইতে আমরা বঞ্চিত ছই নাই, কিন্তু কোনো নিয়মের শাসনে তিনি আমাদের বুদ্ধিকে আমাদের কর্মকে বদ্ধ করেন নাই।” সেই তখনই বাইরের আকর্ষণ শিশুমনে চাক্ষুষ আনত। শৈশবের কথায় কবি বলছেন, “বিশ্বজগৎ যেন বারবার করে আহ্বান করে বলেছে, তুমি আমার আপন।.....তখনও এই বহির্বিশ্বের উপলব্ধি আমার মনের ভিতরে অস্পষ্টভাবে ঘনিজে উঠেছে। ছোটো ঘরের ভিতরকার মানুষটিকে বাইরের ডাক গভীরভাবে মুগ্ধ করেছিল।”

পুস্তকাকারে প্রকাশিত কবির সর্বপ্রথম রচনা ‘কবি-কাহিনী’। ১৮৭৮ অব্দে ছাপা হয়। তখন তিনি মৌল বচ্চরের বালক। পরমাশ্চর্য ব্যাপার, সেই কবির চত্রে চত্রে সর্বমানুষের প্রতি দরদ এবং অত্যাচার-অপগত শান্তিময় স্বপ্নী ধরিত্রীর স্বপ্ন। কয়েক চত্রে উদ্ধৃত করতে লাভ হয়।

হিমালয়কে সম্বোধন করে কবি বলছেনঃ

যা দেখছি যা দেখেছ, তাতে কি এখনো
সর্বত্র তোমার গিরি, উঠেনি শিহরি?
কি দারুণ অশান্তি এ মনুষ্য-জগতে
রক্তপাত অত্যাচার, পাপ-কোলাহল
দিতেছে মানব-মনে বিষ মিশাইয়া।

এ অশান্তি কবে দেব, হবে দরীভূত!
অত্যাচার গুরুভারে হয়ে নির্পীড়িত
সমস্ত পৃথিবী দেব করিছে ক্রন্দন,
স্বপ্নশাস্তি সেথা হোতে লয়েছে বিদায়।
কবে দেব এ রজনী হবে অবসান?
স্নান করি প্রভাতের শিশির-সলিলে
তরুণ রবির করে হাসিবে পৃথিবী।

অমৃত মানবগণ এক কণ্ঠে দেব,
এক গান গাইবেক স্বর্গপূর্ণ করি!
নাইক দরিদ্র-ধনী, অধিপতি, প্রজা.....
কেহ কারো প্রভু নয়, নেহ কারো দাস।
নাই ভিন্ন জাতি আর নাই ভিন্ন ভাষা,
নাই ভিন্ন দেশ, ভিন্ন আচার-ব্যভার।
সকলেই আপনার আপনার লোয়ে
পরিশ্রম করিতেছে প্রফুল্ল অন্তরে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের আত্মজাতিকতা কিন্তু স্বাভাবিক বাদ দিয়ে নয়। জাতীয়তার ত্রুণপরিণতিতে কবি আত্মজাতিকতায় পৌঁছেন—কারো যদি এমন ধারণা থাকে, তিনি ভ্রান্ত। এই দুয়ের মধ্যে বিরোধ নেই। বরঞ্চ জাতীয়তা বিহনে আত্মজাতিকতা বস্তুনিরপেক্ষ ভাববিশ্বাস মাত্র হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। বস্তুত রবীন্দ্র-কাব্যে এ দুটির বিচিত্র সমন্বয় ঘটেছে। দুড়ি যেমন আকাশে ওড়ে, সূতার লানিই মাটিতে।

বস্তুতঃ জালিয়ানওয়ালাবাগের নৃশংসতায় অথবা ছিজলি-জেলের হত্যাকাণ্ডে কবিবক্ষে তিরদার গর্জে উঠেছে। প্রতি-কারের উপায় খুঁজেছেন তিনি, ক্ষেত্রবিশেষে কর্মোদ্যোগে নিহত ন্যাপিয়ে পড়েছেন। স্বদেশের বেদনায় যেমন তিনি ব্যাকুল বহিঃবিশ্বের দুর্দৈবও বারম্বার তেমনি বিম্বুদ্ধ করেছেন। কোভি গুপ্তমাত্র অত্যাচারিতের জন্য নয় অত্যাচারীর আত্মচরিত্র যে কলুষ প্রাপ্ত হল, এই দুঃখ বোধ করি তাঁকে অধিকতর পীড়িত করে। 'সভ্যতার' সংকট কবি-জীবনের শেষ অভিভাষণ—আলোচনাত্মক সর্বাধিক পরিচিত লাভ করেছে। প্রথম জীবনের রবীন্দ্রনাথ ইয়োরোপ থেকে পাশ্চাত্য-সভ্যতার মহিমায় স্মৃতি-পায়ণ করে এসেছিলেন, দ্বিতীয়-মহাসুদ্ধের বীভৎসতার সেই স্মৃতি চুরমার হল—অশ্রুতিবর্ধ আশাহত কবির আত্মনাদ এই 'সভ্যতার সংকট'। "জীবনের প্রথম আরম্ভের সমস্ত মন থেকে বিশ্বাস করেছিলুম যুরোপের অন্তরের সম্পদ এই সভ্যতার দানকে। আজ আমার বিদায়ের দিন সে বিশ্বাস একেবারে দেউলিয়া হয়ে গেছে..... মানব-পীড়নের মহামারী পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার মহজার ভিতর থেকে জাগ্রত হয়ে উঠে আজ মানবজাতির অপমানের দিগন্ত থেকে দিগন্ত পর্যন্ত বাতাস কলুষিত করে দিয়েছে।" "দন-অতীতের একটা কলহ-মটনার উল্লেখ করেছেন এই প্রসঙ্গে: "চীনের মতন এত বড়োপ্রাচীন সভ্য জাতিকে ইংরেজ স্বজাতির স্বার্থ-সাধনের জন্য লপ্তরক অহিকেন নিষ-জঙ্ঘরিত করে দিলে এবং তার পরিবর্তে চীনের এক অংশ আত্মস্বা করলে।" চীনের আফিম-সুদ্ধের ব্যাপার। জীবনের সর্বশেষ ভাষণের যার উল্লেখ, একেবারে প্রথম জীবনে মাত্র কুড়ি বছর বয়সে সেই অনাযের প্রথম প্রতিবাদ করেছিলেন প্রবন্ধ লিখে। সেই প্রবন্ধের নাম 'চীনে মারের ব্যবসায়'।

বিশ্বের মানুষের সঙ্গে কবি যেন এক-পরিবার। পৃথিবীর যে-কোন প্রান্তে মনুষ্যত্বের উপর যখনই আঘাত পড়েছে, কবির লেখনী ধরবার অঙ্গি হয়ে বালক দিয়েছে। আমেরিকায় নিখো জী-পুরুষের উপর চালুক মার, জার-শাসিত রাশিয়ায় ইজদি-হত্যা, কংগোয় বেলজিয়ানদের অত্যাচার, স্পেনে গণতন্ত্রের বিকক্ষে ক্যাসি-আক্রমণ, হিটলারের চেকোস্লোভাকিয়া-অধিকার—কোন অনায়া কবির দৃষ্টি এড়িয়ে যায় নি।

১৯১৩ অব্দে নোবেল-প্রাইজ পেলেন। ভুবনের জাতি-গুণীদের সঙ্গে যদিও বুদ্ধির অধিকতর সুরোগ হল এই সম্মান-লাভে। প্রথম-বিশ্বযুদ্ধের সময় লড়াইয়ের বিপক্ষে কঠোর প্রতিবাদপত্র প্রকাশ করলেন—তখন তিনি একক নন সর্বদেশের বুদ্ধিজীবীরা মিলিত হয়েছেন সেই ব্যাপারে। ১৯১৬ অব্দে জাপান ও আমেরিকা-সম্মে বেকলেন—আলোচনার প্রধান বিষয় 'জাতীয়তা'। পূর্ব ও পশ্চিমের জাতীয়তার স্বরূপ বিশ্লেষণ করলেন তিনি। পশ্চিমের জাতীয়তার পরিণতি যুদ্ধ ও সাম্রাজ্য-বিস্তারে; আর প্রাচ্য জাতীয়তা চিরদিন শান্তি ও বিশ্বমৈত্রী প্রচার করে এসেছে।

শান্তিনিকেতনে অনেক বছর আগে প্রাচীন আশ্রমের আদর্শে ব্রহ্মবিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠা হয়েছে, এবারে কবি সেখানে 'সর্বমানবের যোগসাধনের সেতু' রচনার সঙ্কল্প করছেন। লন্ডন এঙ্গেলস থেকে এই সময়ে লেখা একখানা চিঠি: "ভবিষ্যতের জন্য যে বিশৃঙ্খলিত মহা মিলনযুদ্ধের প্রতিষ্ঠা, হচ্ছে, তার প্রথম আয়োজন ঐ বোলপুরের প্রান্তরেই হবে। ঐ জায়গাটিকে সমস্ত জাতিগত ভুগোলবৃত্তান্তের অতীত করে তুলব এই আমার মনে আছে—সর্বমানবের জয়ধ্বজা এখানে রোপণ হবে।" প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামও দ্বিঃ করে ফেললেন—বিশ্বভারতী। বিশ্ব অর্থাৎ জগৎ, আর ভারতী হল জান-সংস্কৃতি। ভারতের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত বলে ভারতী—এ রকম করলেও যেমানান হবে না।

প্রথম-মহাসুদ্ধ শেষ হয়ে গেছে। ১৯২০-২১ অব্দে কবি আবার বেরিয়ে পড়লেন ইয়োরোপ ও আমেরিকায়। কণ্ঠে মানবমৈত্রীর বাণী—পূর্ব-পশ্চিমে কোন অদৈন্য থাকবে না, নিবিড় আয়িক সম্পর্ক জাগ্রত হবে জাতিপুঞ্জের মধ্যে। এমনি কথা আরও অনেক বলেছেন; পৃথিবীর দেশে দেশে অনেক ভাবুক মহাপাণ বিশাল আদর্শ নিয়ে বিস্তার স্বপ্ন দেখে গেছেন। নমস্কার তারা। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ গুপ্তমাত্র ভাবুক স্বপ্নদ্রষ্টা নন। মানুষের পরম সত্য কলমের লেখায় নানা বিচিত্ররূপে প্রকাশ করেই তিনি নিরন্তর হলেন না। স্বদেশ ফিরে এসে ১৯২১ অব্দের ডিসেম্বরে তিনি বিশ্বভারতীর প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন। একটি সংহত সংস্কৃত বাক্যের মধ্যে বিশ্বভারতীক লক্ষ্য ও চরিত্র প্রকাশ পেয়েছে: 'বহু বিশ্ব ভবত্যেকনীড়ঃ'—তাবৎ পৃথিবী যেখানে একটি নীড় খুঁজে পেয়েছে। এ বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের মুখের কথাই শোনা যাক:

"যুদ্ধ ও সম্মির ভিতর দিয়ে যে নির্দাক্ষণ দুঃখ যুরোপকে আলোড়িত করে তুলেছে তার অর্থ হচ্ছে এই যে, নেশন-রূপের মধ্যে মানুষ আপন সত্যকে আবৃত করে ফেলেছে। মানুষের 'আত্মা বলছে, 'অপাবু'—আবরণ উদঘাটিত করো। মনুষ্যত্বের প্রকাশ আচ্ছন্ন হয়েছে বলে স্বজাতির নামে পাপাচরণ সম্বন্ধে মানুষ একদিন এমন স্পষ্ট ঔদ্ধত্য করতে পেরেছে এবং মনে করতে পেরেছে যে তাতে তার কোনো ক্ষতি হয় নি, লাভই হয়েছে। অবশেষে আজ নেশন যখন 'আপনার মুখল আপনি প্রসব করতে আরম্ভ করেছে, তখন যুরোপে নেশন আপনার স্মৃতি দেখে আতঙ্কিত হয়ে উঠেছে।

নতুন যুগের বাণী এই যে, আবরণ খোলো, হে মানব, আপন উদার রূপ প্রকাশ করো।.....আমাদের এখানে নানা দেশ থেকে নানা জাতির অতিথি এসেছে।.....আমরা এখানে কোন্ মন্ত্রের রূপ দেখব বলে নিয়ত প্রত্যাশা করব। যে মন্ত্র হচ্ছে এই যে—'বহু বিশ্ব ভবত্যেকনীড়ঃ'। দেশে দেশে আমরা মানুষকে তার বিশেষ স্বজাতিক পরিবেষ্টনের মধ্যে খণ্ডিত করে দেখছি, যেখানে মানুষটিকে আপন বলে উপলব্ধি করতে পারি। পৃথিবীর মধ্যে আমাদের আশ্রম এমন একটি জায়গা হয়ে উঠুক, যেখানে ধর্ম ভাষা এবং জাতিগত সকল প্রকার পার্থক্য সত্ত্বেও আমরা মানুষকে তার বাহ্যভেদমুক্ত মানুষ বলে দেখতে পাই। সেই দেখতে পাওয়াই নতুন যুগকে দেখতে পাওয়া।"

তাই হল। সর্ব ধর্ম জাতি ও ভাষার মিলনক্ষেত্র বিশ্বভারতী। মুসলমান ছাত্র-অধ্যাপক এলেন, খ্রীষ্টান-বৌদ্ধ-জৈন এলেন—হিন্দু তো আছেনই। এলেন বাংলার বাইরের ভারতীয়েরা—মারাঠি, গুজরাটি, হিন্দুস্থানি, অসমিয়া, তামিল, অন্ধ্র, মালয়ালি।

Tagore appeals for help

স্বদেশসেবায়

স্বদেশের মানুষকে, যিনি
স্বদেশে চিরস্থায়ী কল্যাণ দিচ্ছেন - এমন
মানুষকে কিছুকিছু সহন করিতে হইবে।
এমনকি যিনি স্বদেশের এই মানুষকে
যে কোনদিকে প্ররোচিত/প্ররোচিত একটি দৃষ্টান্ত
দেখানোর মানুষকে সহন করিতে হইবে।
অস্বীকৃত নহে, ১৯০৬-০৭ চন্দ্র। প্রান্তি
১৯০৬-০৭ চন্দ্রের মধ্যে যদি এই চন্দ্রের
দেখ তবু তবু স্বদেশের স্বদেশসেবায়
অস্বীকৃত চন্দ্রের চন্দ্রের চন্দ্রের
একটি চন্দ্রের চন্দ্রের চন্দ্রের - ১৯০৬-০৭
স্বদেশের মানুষকে চন্দ্রের চন্দ্রের।

স্বদেশের
স্বদেশসেবায়

বিপ্লবীক রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই চিঠিখানি ১৩-৭ বঙ্গাব্দে বন্ধু রাধারমণ করকে লিখেছিলেন। এই চিঠির
জবাবে টাকা পাঠানোর পর রবীন্দ্রনাথ বন্ধুকে ২৫শে মার্চ ১৩০৮ সালে লেখেন :-

"আপনি মঙ্গল কার্যে সহায়তা করিলেন ইহঁর আপনার মঙ্গল করিবেন। এবার অবকাশ
মত শান্তিনিকেতনে আসিবেন তাহাইলে বুঝিতে পারিবেন, কেবল যে বন্ধুকে সহায়তা করিলেন
তাহা নহে। দেশের মঙ্গল কর্মে যোগদান করিলেন।"

Aug 11/1898

১৯৩৩ সালের ১২/১২/৩৩
 ১৯৩৩ সালের ১২/১২/৩৩
 ১৯৩৩ সালের ১২/১২/৩৩

1. Die erste Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 2. Die zweite Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 3. Die dritte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 4. Die vierte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 5. Die fünfte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 6. Die sechste Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 7. Die siebte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 8. Die achte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 9. Die neunte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der
 10. Die zehnte Gruppe ist die Gruppe der

ব্রহ্মীন্দ্রনাথ

১৩ - মানব জাতির পক্ষে
 মানবিক মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক
 মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক মূল্যবোধ
 মানবিক মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক
 মানবিক মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক
 মানবিক মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক
 মানবিক মূল্যবোধ, মানবিক

20.5.8834

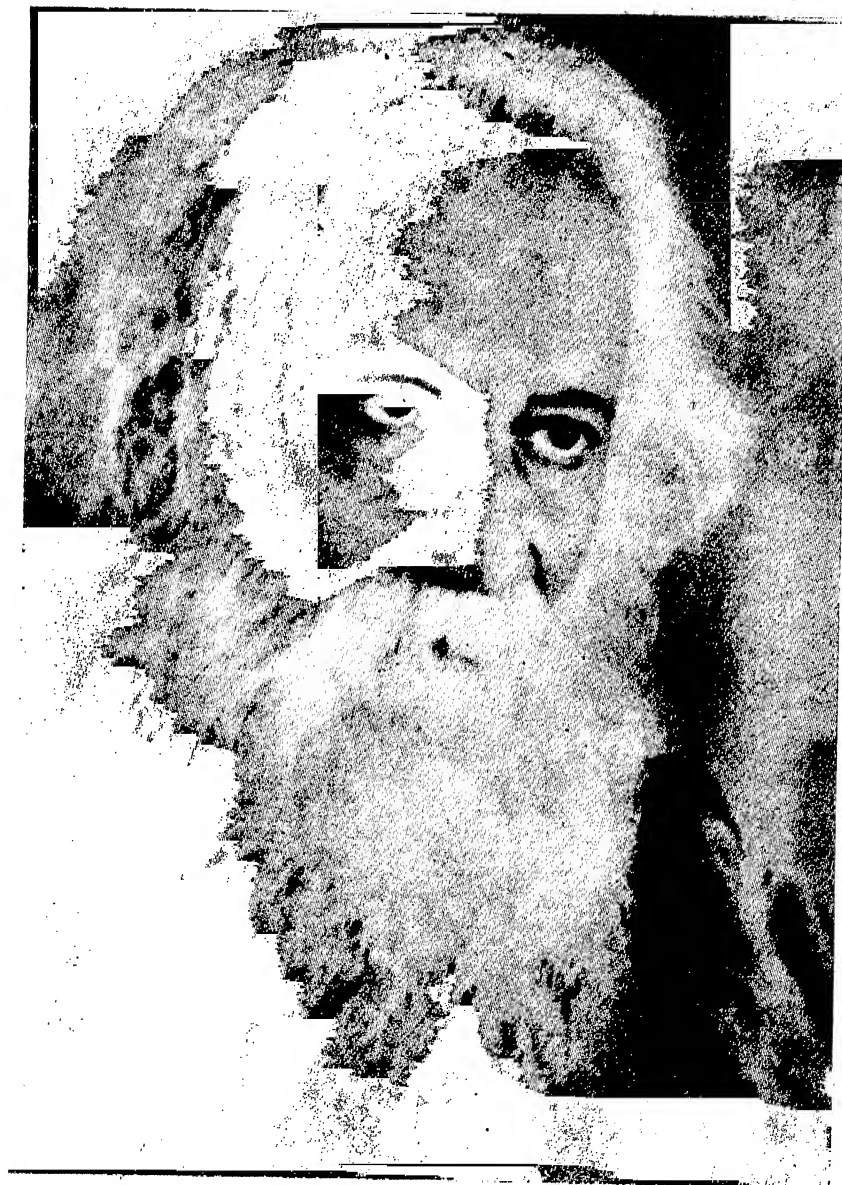
Yours truly,



A Family Reunion

পারিবারিক পরিবেশে কবি

বাসিন্দা হইতে—(দণ্ডায়মান) : রমা দেবী (হৃদীন্দ্র ঠাকুরের কন্যা) দিনেন্দ্র নাথ ঠাকুর, কমলা দেবী (দিনেন্দ্র নাথের স্ত্রী) (উপবিষ্ট) : মীরা দেবী (কনিষ্ঠা কন্যা), নীতীন্দ্র গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় (মীরা দেবীর পুত্র), এনাক্ষী দেবী (হৃদীন্দ্র ঠাকুরের কন্যা), দ্বীপেন্দ্রনাথ, প্রাণমা দেবী (পুত্র বধূ)



1939

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সমুদ্র-পারেও সাড়া পৌঁছে গেছে। এলেন ইংরেজ, ফরাসি, জার্মান, ইতালীয়, চেক, হাঙ্গেরীয়, মার্কিন, মিশরীয়, চীনা, জাপানি, সিংহলি, আফ্রিকার নিক্তো, মার্কিন নিক্তো, ইরানের পারসিক, ইসরায়েলের ইহুদি। শাস্তিনিকেতনের প্রান্তরে ভুবনের সর্বপ্রান্তের মনীষা এসে সমবেত হল।

বিশ্বভারতীর বাণী বহন করে পৃথিবীময় টুটাটুটি গুরু হল কবির। চীনের গেলেন ১৯২৪ অব্দে। চীনে আর ভারতে হাজার হাজার বছরের পুরানো সম্পর্ক—সেই স্তপ্রাচীন সৌহার্দ্য। তিনি নতুন করে প্রতিষ্ঠা করে এলেন। সেই বছরই চললেন দক্ষিণ-আমেরিকার পেরুরাজ্যে—তাদের স্বাধীনতার শতবাধিকা উৎসবে। ফেব্রুয়ারি পথে ইতালি। দু-বছর বাদে আবার ইয়োরোপ—পশ্চিম ও মধ্য-ইয়োরোপের সর্বত্র। গেলেন বলকান রাজ্যে, তুরস্কে ও মিশরে। পরের বছর মালয় উপদ্বীপ, যবদ্বীপ বলিঙ্গীপ এবং শামেরাজ্য পরিভ্রমণ করে বৃহত্তর-ভারতের নব আবিষ্কার করে এলেন। পরের বছর কানাডা ও ইন্ডোচীনে। তার পরের বছর ব্যাপকভাবে পরিভ্রমণ করলেন ইংলণ্ড, ফ্রান্স, জার্মনি, ডেনমার্ক, রাশিয়া ও আমেরিকা। বিপ্রবোভের-রাশিয়া

প্রত্যক্ষ করে মুগ্ধ বিস্ময়ে কবি লিখলেনঃ “রাশিয়ায় এসেছি। না এলে এ জন্মের তীর্থদর্শন অত্যন্ত অসমাপ্ত থেকে যেত।” তারপরেও কবি গিয়েছেন পারস্যে—১৯৩২ অব্দের এপ্রিলে।

বিশ্বব্যাপ্ত তীর্থ-পরিভ্রমণ। দেশে দেশে নর-দেবতার বহু বিচিত্র রূপ-সন্দর্শন। যহযা নৈচিত্র্যের মনো একাক্ষাপনা। ভাষণে, গানে, আবৃত্তি ও অভিনয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ দিগ্বিজয় করলেন। ভারতের সাংস্কৃতিক বিজয়। ভারত অতি-দ্রিষ্ট ও পরপদানত তখন, কিন্তু ভারতের কবি রাজরাজেশ্বরের গৌরব আহরণ করে এলেন। না, তার অনেক বেশি। রাজসৈন্য রত্নবন্য বইয়ে পড়ু প্রতীহা করে, বিজিতের অহরহা বিমুগ্ধ হয়ে থাকে—রাজকীয় বিজয় অচিরহারা।

কতকাল কেটে গেছে তারপর। কবির দিগ্বিজয়ের ফল বহির্বিশ্বে আজও গিয়ে প্রত্যক্ষ করা যায়।

দুনিয়ার প্রায় সর্বত্র রবীন্দ্র শতবাধিকা উৎসব—রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাদের প্রাণের মানুষ, এই সত্য জানাবার জন্য দুনিয়া মুগ্ধ-মানুষ সেই আকুলিবিবিকুলি করছে। এরপর দিগ্বিজয় যে কীটি মহামানব করেছে, তাঁদের সংখ্যা আঙুলে গণা যায়।

র বী ঙ্র না থ

বঙ্গবাণী কুঞ্জে তুমি আনিবে শুভলগ্না
বাজালে বেণু মোহন ভানে পুরান হ'ল মণ্ডা।
বিদ্যান যবে বাজালে মরি,
গলিয়া শিলা পড়িল বারি।
মিশিল স্রোতে বন্ধ ধারা পাষণ-কারা-ভণ্ডা।

—সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত

তব বীণায়ত্রে বাজে পূর্ববীর রাগিনী উদায়-
বৈশাখী নিদ্রা-দিনা মানেনা যে নিদ্রা-ছতায়,
যত শেষ হয় আয়ু তত তার রূপ রমণীয়!

—মোহিতলাল মজুমদার

এ পঙ্কজে রক্ত মাথা যে পার্থী ঝাপটে পাখা
বন্ধন বেদনে অধিরাম,
ছিন্ন তার ওষ্ঠপুটে যে গান কাঁদিয়া ওঠে
সেই গানে করে সে প্রণাম।

—যতীন্দ্রনাথ সেনগুপ্ত



রবীন্দ্র-চিত্রের মঞ্চলোক

নন্দগোপাল সেনগুপ্ত

রবীন্দ্রনাথের উল্লেখযোগ্য চিত্রগুলি ভালো করে পরীক্ষা করলে একথা অনায়াসেই বোঝা যায় যে সাহিত্যে যথেষ্ট রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও চিত্রশিল্পী রবীন্দ্রনাথের একটা মূলগত পার্থক্য রয়েছে। সাহিত্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যে প্রয়াস, তা কখনো শুচিতা ও সৌন্দর্যের গভীর বাইরে আসে না। জীবনের ও জগতের বিচিত্ররূপ কুটিলে তাতে সন্দেহ নেই, কিংবা কুৎসিত, কদম্বা স্থূল বা মধু, তাকে তিনি সমস্ত পরিহার করেছেন। বাস্তবকে ভিত্তি করেই জন্মেছে এমনটা তাঁর সাহিত্যে বোধ, কিংবা বাস্তবকে অতিক্রম করে তা উন্নীত হয়েছে ভালের রাজ্যে। কিন্তু চিত্রে যথেষ্ট—রবীন্দ্রনাথের রূপ দিক এর বিপরীত। যা কদম্বা, যা নীভংস যা উল্লস উৎকর্ষ, তাকেও তিনি গোপন করেন নি। আবার যা স্তম্ভ মধুর ও মনোহর, তাকেও তিনি অসিক মূল্যে অতিথিত করেন নি। স্তম্ভের কুৎসিতে শুচিতো অশুচিতো ভালোর মন্দে অনিয়মিত মেশামেশি হয়েছে তাঁর চিত্রে। এবং বসতে পারি অঙ্কুর অশুচি ও নীভংসেরই পাবান ঘটেছে তাতে।

কেন এমন হল? একই রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই দ্বিধা-বিভক্ত রূপ কেন দেখি আমরা? এই প্রশ্নের উত্তরে পৌঁছতে হলে আমাদের যেতে হবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাঙ্কন পর্বেই গোড়ার ইতিহাসে। অনেকেরই জানেন আশা করছি যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ দ্বিবিদ্য বিদ্যা হিসাবে ছবি আঁকা কোনদিন শিক্ষা করেন নি এবং সত্তর বৎসর পরম পবিত্র ছবি পদবী লাভ করতে পারে এমন কোন জিনিষও তাঁর হাত থেকে জন্মায নি। হঠাৎ সত্তরের সামান্য বয়ে শিল্প সাধনার এই দিকটি উন্মুক্ত হয়ে গেল তাঁর সামনে এবং হল অনেকটা আকস্মিক ভাবেই। কবিতা রচনার সময় পাণ্ডুলিপিতে তাঁর কখনো কখনো খুব কায়িকুটি হত। এই কায়িকুটি গুলোর ওপর আনমনেই কবন ঘটতেন তিনি। বলা যেতে পারে হিজিবিজি আঁকতেন। আসলে বাইরে কলম যখন এই ভাবে খেলা করত, ভেতরে মন তখন তাঁর রচনার চরখাকিতে মনের মতো স্তর ও শব্দের প্রচুর করত। তারপর খেই আসত লেখার বেগ, অমনি সেই কায়িককলিতে হিজিবিজির পদচিহ্ন একান্ত মোলে রেখে এগিয়ে যেতেন তিনি লেখার পথে। এ থেকেই একদিন আবিষ্কার করলেন তিনি যে এ হিজিবিজিগুলোর মতো দিয়ে নিজের অজান্তেই তাঁর হাত সৃষ্টি করেছে বকমারি 'রূপ', যা কোথাও বাস্তবের কোথাও বা অতি-বাস্তবের প্রতিচ্ছবি হয়ে রচনার মর্যাদা দাবী করতে পারে। এখানেই তাঁর সামনে খুলে গেল বৃহৎ একটা অজ্ঞাত লোকের দরজা। জগৎপানে স্তর করলেন তিনি চিত্রাঙ্কন এবং এক এক করে দেড় হাজারেরও বেশী ছবি রচনা করলেন তিনি জীবনের শেষ দশ বৎসরে। প্রথমে স্তর করেছিলেন কালি কলমের রেখাঙ্কন, জন্মে অঙ্কণে আসতে

স্তর করল বিচিত্র আঙ্গিক ও রীতির পরীক্ষা, সেই সঙ্গে উপকরণ হিসাবে এল রং তুলি এবং আরো যা যা লাগে। লক্ষ্য করার বিষয় যে হাতও যেনন উত্তরোত্তর খুলতে লাগল 'তাঁর', দৃষ্টিও তেমনি চড়িয়ে পড়তে লাগল অঙ্কণের নূতন নূতন দিগন্তে।

এই ইতিহাসে এইটুকু বোঝা গেল যে চিত্রাঙ্কন বিদ্যায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ অনুশীলনের মধ্য দিয়ে আরও করেন নি, ওঁনি এয়েছিল তাঁর কাছে হঠাৎ পাওয়া একটা শক্তির মতো। এর ফলে দ্বিবিদ্য শিক্ষার যে গ্রামার তা তাঁর কল্পনার সহজ গতির মুখে রীতি-পদ্ধতির লাগাম পরাতে পারেনি। অকপটে আপন অভিজ্ঞতা অনুভূতি ও কল্পনাকে প্রকাশ করবার সহজতাতুকু তাঁর অধিকৃতই থেকে ছিল এ জন্মে। পক্ষান্তরে অঙ্কণের গ্রামারে দক্ষতা ছিল না বলেই, ছবি তাঁর বিশুদ্ধ চিত্র-বিজ্ঞানের নিরিখে সব সময় সর্বদাঙ্গী চবির লাভ করেনি। অঙ্গ-সংস্থানে, পরিপেক্ষিত ব্যবস্থাপনে, আলোক সমীপাতে পদে পদে হয়েছে তাঁর ত্রুটি। কতক ছবি তাঁর বাস্তবের কাছাকাছি, কতক অতি-বাস্তবের অভিমুখী, কোনটা স্পষ্ট কোনটা জটিল ধোঁয়াটে দুর্বোধ্য। যেন দেখার মধ্যেই অদেখা, বোঝার মধ্যেই অবোঝা কি একটা রয়েছে, এই ছিল তাঁর বেশীর ভাগ ছবি। অর্থাৎ শিক্ষাপ্রাপ্ত শিল্পী না হওয়া একই সঙ্গে তাঁর পক্ষে যেনন লাভের হয়েছে তেমনি লোকসানেরও হয়েছে। লোকসানের কথা এইমাত্র বলা হল, বিজ্ঞান-গিদ্ধ অঙ্কণ হিসাবে তাঁর বহু ছবি অনুষ্ঠানের মার্ক্য পায়। আর লাভের দিক হল এই যে আপন আবেগ অনুভূতি ও কামনা কল্পনাকে তিনি কোথাও রেখে রেখে প্রকাশ করেন নি, যা করে থাকেন প্রত্যেক 'শিক্ষিত' শিল্পীই। তাঁদের ছবি বাক্যকে 'কতক' নিপুণ নির্ভুল ও জীবন্ত হয় দ্বি-ই, কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছবির মতো বলিষ্ঠ প্রাণশক্তি, ক্রান্ত ও অস্পষ্টতার মধ্যেও প্রকাশের এমন প্রাচুর্য্য তাতে থাকে না।

একথা অবশ্য এই প্রসঙ্গে বলে রাখা দরকার যে ছবির রাজ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে বার অনুসরণ করেছেন, তা পিকাসো ও মাতিস অনুসৃত স্তরীয়ালিষ্টিক বা অতি-বাস্তবিক অঙ্কণ বারারই অনুবর্তী। পার্থক্য এই যে পিকাসো ও মাতিস 'শিক্ষিত' শিল্পী ছিলেন বলেই তাঁদের অবলম্বিত বারাকে তাঁরা একটি দার্শনিক ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করে গেছেন। আর রবীন্দ্রনাথ এমোচার বা অপেশাদার শিল্পী ছিলেন বলে সেই একই দার্শনিকত্ব তিনি ব্যক্ত করেছেন কতকটা কৈফিয়তের আকারে। আসলে কথানি পরিধানযোগ্য। পিকাসো বলেন, মানুষ যা সৃষ্টি করে তার মধ্যে শ্রী সম্ভ্রতি ও বার্য্য বাহ্যিকতা থাকে। মানুষের হাতের বাইরে যা সৃষ্টি হয়, তা হল বিশৃঙ্খলা প্রথিত এবং নানা ভগ্নাংশের সমবায় গড়ে-ওঠা একটা কিছু। বহিঃপ্রকৃতি বা অহঃপ্রকৃতি যেখানে তাকান,

সেখানেই এই বিশ্বাস। কারো ও চিত্রে যুগ্ম যদি মনের কল্পনা কামনা বা আবেগকে অবিকৃতরূপে ফেনিতে চান, তাহলে তা অনিবার্যভাবেই হবে অসংলগ্ন। কিছু বোঝা, কিছু অবোঝা, কিছু বাস্তব, কিছু অবাস্তব যেখানে মিলেমিশে এক হয়েচে, সেখানে সফলত চাভা তাই আয়প্রকাশ কিভাবে সম্ভব ?

লক্ষ্য করার বিষয় যে কারো এই সফলত পরিহার্য মৌলিক বিরোধী ছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। আধুনিক কবিদের মধ্যে যারা এই ধারা অনুসরণ করেছেন, দু' একখানি চিঠিতে এবং শেষ জীবনের একটা প্রবন্ধে তিনি তাঁদের সম্পর্কে কঠোর মন্তব্য করেছেন। তিনি বলেছেন, সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি হয় যুগ্মের আনন্দ থেকে একথা ঠিক। কিন্তু তা সার্থক হয় ভোজ্যের আনন্দের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়ে। অর্থাৎ লেখক-পাঠকের অন্তরঙ্গতার সেতুবন্ধন চাই। লেখকের বক্তব্যের সিংহদরজা পান হয়ে পাঠক যেখানে অন্দরে পৌঁছতেই পারেন না, সেখানে লেখার সার্থকতা কি রইল ? কার জন্যে লেখা হল ? কিন্তু মজা এই যে চবির ক্ষেত্রে দশকের সঙ্গে শিল্পীর অনুভূতির সেতুবন্ধন ঘাঁটের জন্যে যোন্টাই সচেষ্ট হননি রবীন্দ্রনাথ, বরং বলেছেন, সব জিনিষই বোঝার জন্যে নয়। বোঝার পথ ধরে চলতে চলতে না বোঝার অন্ধকারে পথ হারানির আনন্দটাই শিল্পের সবচেয়ে বড় দান। জ্ঞানিতির কীটা কল্যাণ নিয়ে যারা বসে বান চবির মূল্য কষতে, তাঁদের জন্যেই নিম্নের বাক্য আছে না লিখ, না লিখ! অর্থাৎ সেই পিকাসো পর্য্যন্তেরই কথা।

এখন প্রশ্ন উঠবে, প্রায়টি বৎসরের সাহিত্যিক জীবনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যা সৃষ্টি করেছেন, দশ বৎসরের শিল্পী জীবনে তাহলে কি তিনি তাঁর সেই জীবনব্যাপী আদর্শের বিরোধিতা করেছেন ? কি এই স্ববিরোধিতার মূল কারণ ? বলা বাহুল্য বিরোধিতা এত স্পষ্ট যে তা আর প্রমাণের অপেক্ষা রাখেনা। কিন্তু তাকে কার্য-কারণ যুক্তি দাঁধতে গেলে, একই মানুষের এই দ্বি-মানসিকতার অরূপ নির্ণয় করতে হলে বেশ একটা কঁপরে পড়তে হবে। একথা অস্বীকার করে লাভ নেই যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্য-দর্শন বৃহৎ ও বহু ব্যাপক হয়েও, তা সীমার দ্বারা চিহ্নিত ছিল। তিনি যে আবেদনীতে জন্মেছিলেন, যে শিক্ষা-দীক্ষা ও পারিপার্শ্বিকে তাঁর মননশীলতা প্রঠন করেছিল, তাতে সমাজ ও মানুষের সমগ্ররূপ স্বাভাবিক কারণেই তাঁর চোখে বরা পড়েনি। আবার যে ধারায় নিজেই তিনি ব্যক্ত করতে অভ্যস্ত হয়েছিলেন, তাতেও অনিবার্যভাবেই এসেছিল একটা বিধি-নিষেধাশ্রিত ঘসামাজ্য আনন্দারিক উজ্জ্বলতার রূপ। তাই জৈবতা ও তার নিকট নিরাবরণ অভিব্যক্তি রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে কোথাও পাওয়া যায় না। মানুষের উন্মত্ত হিংসা ক্ষুধিত বিকৃত ও বুদ্ধিহত রূপকে তিনি সময়ে পরিহাস করে গেছেন। এগুলি অসত্য একথা তিনি বলেন নি, এই সত্য-শিল্পের অঙ্গনে জলাচরণীয় নয়, এই কথাই তিনি বলেছেন। তাঁর বিখ্যাত একটা কথা হল, পক্ষটা সত্য বটে, কিন্তু পক্ষও ত সত্য! পক্ষকে একান্তে সরিয়ে রেখে পাঁক ঘাঁটখানি হল সাহিত্যিক অমোরপন্থীর কাজ।

কিন্তু জ্ঞাতসারে সাহিত্যে যে অমোরপন্থাকে তিনি সময়ে পরিহার করেছেন, শুধু তাই নয়, যুগ্মের দ্বারা সম্বন্ধিত করেছেন, অজ্ঞাতসারে তাই এসে আয়প্রতিষ্ঠ হয়েচে তাঁর চবিতে। চলতি দৃষ্টিতে যাকে আমরা শ্রীল, শুচি, স্কন্দ বলি, তার প্রত্যক্ষ প্রতিবাদ মূর্ত হয়েচে তাঁর বড় চবিতে এবং লক্ষণীয় যে আদ্রিক আবেদনী ও বর্ণনামায়ে সেগুলিই তাঁর সর্বোত্তম শিল্পকর্ম। তাহলে এই কথাই কি দাঁড়াল না যে যে-বাস্তবতা ও জৈবতাকে তিনি সাহিত্যের

অঙ্গনে প্রবেশাধিকার দেন নি, তাঁর অবচেতনায় তাদেরও ছিল বৃহৎ একটা স্বীকৃতির দাবী ? সেই দাবীই অননুশীলিত তুলির মুখে তাঁর সজাগ মনকে কানি দিয়ে প্রকাশমান হয়েচে।

তাঁর উল্লেখযোগ্য চবিতুলির মধ্যে মিথুন মূর্তির সংখ্যানিক নিশ্চয় মননশীল দর্শকের চোখ এড়ায়নি। গুহা প্রবলের জমিন অন্ধকারে প্রাগ-ইতিহাসিক শূন্যে ঘনীভূতের সঙ্গে মানুষের জড়াভুক্তির ভয়ঙ্কর স্কন্দ মূর্তিও তাঁর সংখ্যায় অর নয়। ভগ্নাংশে পর্য্যাবসিত বিকট বিকলাঙ্গ মানব-মানবীর অট্টালিকা নিরত চমকপ্রদ চিত্রও তাঁর চোখে পড়ে অজস্র। ইত্যন্তঃ বিক্ষিপ্ত ভাবে খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় মানব-ত্বের সেইসব দিক, অর্থবান ভাষায় যাকে তিনি বদাচ রূপ দেন নি। এক হিসাবে রবীন্দ্র-চিত্রের বারো আনাঈ এই। অবশ্য যাকে আমরা সজিব ও স্বাভাবিক বলি, সেই জীবনেরও রূপায়ণ আছে তাঁর চবিতে। জ্যোত্স্নালোকিত বিশাল দিগন্তে ধান স্থিতিতে মেত্র মারীর রূপ মূর্তি পরিগ্রহ করেছে তাঁর তুলিতে। মৃত্যুমুখর হরিণ যুগল সত্বক কামনার তরুণ তরুণীর মিথুন মূর্তির কাছে এথিয়ে এসেছে, প্রাকৃতিক ফুলের দলগুলিকে পরিবাস্ত করে অশ্রু-বিধূন দুটি চোখ উঁকি দিয়ে, যুগল যরণের মাঝখান দিয়ে অস্পষ্ট সর্পিলা দেখা যাবে তারা সংখ্যায় এবং প্রাণজড়িতেও পূর্বোক্ত দলের সমকক্ষ নয়। বলতে বাধ্য যেই যে এই বিভাগের চিত্রকর্ম তাঁর বহুত, সফলত নয়। তাই চিত্রী রবীন্দ্রনাথের পূর্ণ পরিচয় তারা বহন করে না, যা করে থাকে বিভাগটি।

প্রথমত বলা যেতে পারে যে প্রাচ্য চিত্ররীতির পুনরুজ্জীবনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ একদা এদেশে বৃহৎ একটা তুলিকা নিয়েছিলেন। কাউন্ট ওকাকুরা, ভগিনী নিবেদিতা, তিনি ও অবনীন্দ্র নাথই তথাকথিত পাটচকলাকে শিল্পরীতি রূপে এদেশে নুতন করে প্রবর্তন করেছিলেন। অবনীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে চিত্রী এবং রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর উৎসাহিতা, কারণ চিত্রাঙ্গনের চিত্রা তখন মনেও উদয় হয়নি তাঁর। এই পাচ্য চিত্ররীতি নিয়ে অনুকূল প্রতিকূল যাই আলোচনা হয়ে থাকে দেশে, একটা কথা এই শিল্পীপোষ্ঠি মননশীল মানুষদের বোঝাতে সমর্থ হয়েছিলেন যে চিত্রকলা কৌশলিক নয়, বাস্তবের ভবন প্রতিচ্ছবি তুলির মুখে ফেনিতে পারাই শিল্প রচনার প্রমার্থ নয়। শিল্পী চোখে যা দেখেন, তার সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয় তাঁর মনের দেখাও। সেই মায়া বীক্ষণের দৃষ্টি এসে পড়ে যখন বাইরের দৃষ্ট বস্তুতে, তখন স্বাভাবিক কারণেই তাঁর বস্তুরূপ যায় বদলে। কাছেই বাস্তবে যৌন যে রকম দেখতে, চবিতে যৌন যে রকম নয় বলা বসিকের উক্তি নয়। বলা বাহুল্য প্রাচ্য কলারীতির প্রাণধর্ম সর্বক্ষে এই উক্তি একমিক হানে করেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথই।

কিন্তু কালক্রমে যখন অরং দেখা দিলেন তিনি চিত্রশিল্পী রূপে, তখন তিনি প্রাচ্য রীতিতে এই দার্শনিক ভিত্তির উপর দাঁড়বার চেষ্টা করলেন না। তিনি অবলম্বন করলেন প্রাচ্য রীতির একেবারে অতি আধুনিক ধারার, যেখানে অবয়ব আবেগ ও আবেদনী সবই প্রধানত সফলত-নিষ্ঠর, রূপ যেখানে একপ ও নিক্রপের মধ্যে দৌলুয়মান। পিকাসো, মাতিস, গগা, সের্জ প্রমুখের চবি যে তিনি ভালো করে অনুশীলন করেছিলেন বা এই সফলত বর্ণী অতি-বাস্তবিক অঙ্গনের পক্ষে তাঁদের দার্শনিক ব্যাখ্যানগুলি যে তিনি আদ্যোপাৎ পর্য্যালোচনা করেছিলেন, এমন কথা তাঁর সঙ্গে চবি সম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত আলোচনা করেও বহনই আমার মনে হয়নি, প্রায় একই সময়ে প্রায় একই ধারা

প্রাকট হয়েছে তাঁর হাতে অনেকটা অজ্ঞাতসারেই। হতে পারে জয়েন্টীয় অবচেতনাবাদের ব্যাপক প্রচার এবং শিল্প সাহিত্যের প্রাণলোকে অবচেতনতার স্বেচ্ছা ভূমিকা সম্পর্কীয় ব্যাপ্তান রবীন্দ্রনাথকেও একই ভাবে নাড়া দিয়েছিল, যেমন দিয়েছিল পিকাসো গোড়িকে। তাঁর ফলেই জন্মেছিল আত্মস্বত্ব পথে তাঁর অঙ্গন ধারা। ঘটনাটিকে যার প্রাণগত মিল হয়েছে সমসাময়িক আর একটি প্রসিদ্ধ শিল্পীতির সঙ্গে।

অনেকে জানেন আশা করি যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চরিত্র পৃথিবীর অপরিশোধিত সভ্য সমুদ্রেই পদশীল মানবের গুণীকরণের উচ্চপন্থা লাভ করেছে। ফরাসী ইতালীয়ান স্বাধীনভিন্নেভিন্নান ও রুশ মূল্যকে এমন কথা ও বক্তব্য বলেছেন যে শিল্পী রবীন্দ্রনাথ সাহিত্যিক রবীন্দ্রনাথের চেয়ে বড় ছাড়া ছোট নন। হরত সোভিয়েট মূল্য ছাড়া আর সব দেশেই তখন ত্রিভুজিক বা কিউবিক, অতিসাহিত্যিক বা স্তরবিয়ালিষ্টিক অঙ্গনের একাধিকার চলেছে বলেই, রবীন্দ্র-চিত্র তাঁদের কাছে অদ্ভুত বা উদ্ভট ঠেকেনি। অথবা অতীন্দ্রিয়তা প্রভাবিত রবীন্দ্র রচনার মধ্যে তাঁরা যে জিনিষটি পাননি, চরিত্রে, তার সাফল্য পেয়েই তাঁরা এতটা অভিভূত হয়েছিলেন। মোটের উপর দেশের চেয়ে বিদেশে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চরিত্র বেশী আদৃত হয়েছে, এটা লক্ষণীয়। একজন নরওয়েবাসী শিল্পী 'সে' নামক কিশোর পাঠ্য বইখানিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চরিত্র দেখে বর্তমান লেখককে বলেছিলেন, কেবলমাত্র এই কথানি চরিত্র আঁকতে পারলেই আমি

জীবন সার্থক মনে করতাম। এক সঙ্গে বড় কবি ও শিল্পী মানুষের ইতিহাসে আর জন্মাননি।

কথাটি প্রণিধান করবার মতো। প্রসিদ্ধ কবিদের মধ্যে গ্যোতো, ভিক্টর হুগো, উইলিয়াম শেক্সপীয়ার ও গ্যাব্রিয়েল রোসোটি চিত্রাঙ্কণে কতিপয় স্বাক্ষর রেখে গেছেন। এঁদের মধ্যে শেক্সপীয়ার একটা মানসিক আঁধার আক্রমণে ভুগেছিলেন, তাই তাঁর পরিণত জীবনের কবিতা ও চরিত্র মধ্যে একটা ধোঁয়া ধোঁয়া ছায়া ছায়া ভাব দেখা যায়, যদিও তিনি তৎকাল প্রচলিত অঙ্গন ধারারই অনুগত করেছেন। আর সবাইও করেছেন তাই। কাজেই তাঁদের চরিত্র যতটা কৌতুহলের বস্তু, ততটা মাথায় করে রাখবার মতো জিনিষ নয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিশেষত্ব এই যে চরিত্র রাজ্যে তিনি এসেছিলেন অগম্যরূপে, কিন্তু নিজেই প্রকাশের ভাষা তিনি নিজেই গড়ে নিয়েছিলেন। কারো কাছে ধার করেনি কিছুর। 'রবীন্দ্র' মন্ডলালের ঘনিষ্ঠ সাহচর্যে সারা জীবন থেকেও, আসলে তাঁর মধ্যে ছিল এমন এক সার্বভৌম শিল্পী-সত্তা, যা সঙ্গীত চিত্র কাব্য ও অভিনয়...কলাকৃষ্টির এই চতুষ্পর্গ শাখাতেই সমভাবে নিজেই অভিব্যক্ত করেছেন। রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার পরিধি নিকরপথের সময় এই সামগ্রিক রূপটি তাঁর যদি আমরা প্রণিধান না করি, তাহলে রবীন্দ্র পরিচিতি আমাদের কোনদিনই সম্পূর্ণতা লাভ করবে না।

রাজনীতি ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ

তাঁর রাজনৈতিক তত্ত্বের মূলকথা আত্মনির্ভরশীলতা। এই মূল কথাতে অবলম্বন করেই তিনি রাজনৈতিক সভ্য প্রথম 'বাংলা ভাষা'র স্থান করে দেন। দেশের কথা দেশের ভাষায় কথিত হবে, এখনকার দিনে সর্বত্র প্রাপ্ত এই সত্যকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে যেদিন তাঁকে অনেক বিরুদ্ধ সমালোচনা সহ্য করতে হয়েছিল। এটি করার দ্বারা তিনি দেশের সমসাময়িক সার্বজনীন ভূমিকার উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠা দিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। যাকে আমরা স্বদেশী আলোচন বলে জানি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছিলেন তার অন্যতম চিত্রনাথক। তখন তিনি একেবারে প্রত্যক্ষ রাজনীতির ক্ষেত্রেই অবতীর্ণ হয়েছিলেন। তখনকার দিনের কথা যাদের মনে আছে, তাঁরা ভুলতে পারবেননা রবীন্দ্রনাথের বক্তৃতা, সঙ্গীত ও উপস্থিতির যে কি উদ্দীপনাময়ী শক্তি। একথা স্বীকার করতেই হবে যে, তাঁর ইচ্ছিত থেকে বঞ্চিত হলে স্বদেশী আলোচন ভিন্নতর মূর্তি গ্রহণ করতো।

শেষ পর্যন্ত কিন্তু প্রত্যক্ষ রাজনীতির বহুদক্ষ হতে তিনি বিদায় নিলেন। তার আসল কারখানা হচ্ছে দেশের সার্বজনীন অভিব্যক্তির পতি থেকে তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের প্রতি ক্ষতের ছিল। প্রত্যক্ষ রাজনীতি থেকে তিনি বিদায় নিলেন না বলে বলা উচিত—তিনি দেশকে ছাড়িয়ে অনেক এগিয়ে গেলেন। এইতো বাস্তবিক। কারণ এত বড় বিরাট প্রকৃষের সঙ্গে ভাল বেখে চলা সর্বজননের পক্ষে সম্ভবপর নয়।

—শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়

রবীন্দ্রনাথ : বালা ও কৈশোর

কাজী আবদুল ওহুদ



রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্মদিন স্মরণীয়—বাংলা ১২৬৮ সালের ২৭শে বৈশাখ। ইয়োরোপীয় মতে সেটি ছিল ১৮৬১ খ্রীস্টাব্দের ৭ই মে। বাংলা মতে সেইদিন ছিল সোমবার, কিং ইয়োরোপীয় মতে সেদিন ছিল মঙ্গলবার। তার কারণ, কবির জন্ম হয়েছিল মধ্য রাত্রির পরে।

কবির পূর্বপুরুষদের কথা তাঁর সুপরিচিত 'জীবনী'তে বিস্তারিত ভাবে বলা হইয়াছে। সে-সবের অনেকটাই অবশ্য কিংবদন্তী। সেই সব থেকে মাত্র এইটুকু গ্রহণ করলেই আমাদের চলবে যে, আচার প্রধান-সেকালে প্রায়-আচার সর্বদা—হিন্দু সমাজে কবির পূর্বপুরুষদের যথেষ্ট প্রতিকূলতা সহ্য করতে হয়েছিল; তার কারণ, সে-সমাজে তাদের গণ্য করা হয়েছিল এক শ্রেণীর পতিত বাক্য বলে। কি কি কারণে কোনো কোনো বংশের লোকদের সেকালে, পণ্ডিত সান্যস্ত করা হ'ত সে সম্বন্ধে বহু কৌতূহলকর বিবরণ পণ্ডিত ক্ষিত্রিনোহন সেনের "জাতিবিচার" গ্রন্থে রয়েছে। কিন্তু সৌভাগ্যক্রমে কবির পূর্বপুরুষেরা সেই সব প্রতিকূলতার কাছে হার মানেন নি। ইংরেজ আমলের সূচনায় দেখা যায়, তাঁরা কলকাতায় এসে বসবাস করছেন, আর সেদিনের আইন-আদালতের ভাষা পার্সীর সঙ্গে ইংরেজিও কিছু আয়ত্ত্ব করে ইংরেজদের সঙ্গে ব্যবসায়ের মন দিয়ে ধন ও সমাজিক প্রতিপত্তি দুইই অর্জন করেছেন। কলকাতায় আসার পরে তাঁদের বংশের কুশারী উপাধি অপ্রচলিত হয়ে পড়ে, আর চারপাশের লোকদের মুখে ব্রাহ্মণের সহজ লভা ঠাকুর উপাধি প্রচলিত হয়। এই ঠাকুর ইংরেজ ব্যবসায়ীদের মুখে হয় 'Tagore' অথবা 'Tagore'—এ কালের জগৎ ও জীবনের সঙ্গে ঠাকুর-বংশের লোকদের যে দীর্ঘকালের পরিচয় তা বোঝা যাচ্ছে এইসব থেকে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের পিতামহ দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুরকে ধরা যেতে পারে জোড়াসাঁকোর ঠাকুর পরিবারের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা। তাঁর জন্ম ১৭৯৪ খ্রীস্টাব্দে। তিনি বহুগুণে ভূষিত ছিলেন—মাতৃভাষা ভিন্ন পার্সী, আরবী, ইংরেজি ও সংস্কৃত ভাল জানতেন; ভারত-বর্ষীয় ও ইয়োরোপীয় উভয় সঙ্গীতেই তিনি পারদর্শী হয়েছিলেন; আইন সম্বন্ধে তাঁর গভীর জ্ঞান ছিল; আর নানা ধরনের ব্যবসায়ের দ্বারা ও পরে জমিদারির দ্বারা তিনি অগাধ ধন-ঐশ্বর্য্যের ও বিপুল খ্যাতি-প্রতিপত্তির অধিকারী হন। বহু লোকহিতকর অনুষ্ঠানে অজয়্য অর্থ তিনি দান করেছিলেন। নবভারতের ঐশ্বর্য্য রাজা রামমোহন রায়ে তিনি ছিলেন একজন সম্মানিত সহকর্মী, বিশেষত দেশের চিন্তাৎকর্ষের ও রাজনীতির ক্ষেত্রে—সংবাদ-পত্রের—স্বাধীনতা-আন্দোলনে তিনি এক সময়ে স্মরণীয়

ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। তিনি প্রথমবার বিলেতে যান ১৮৪২ খ্রীস্টাব্দে। বিলেতে গিয়ে খুব জাঁকজমকপূর্ণ জীবন তিনি যাপন করতেন। তার ফলে সোখানকার সমস্ত সমাজে তাঁর নামকরণ হয়েছিল পিন্স দ্বারকানাথ। কিন্তু শুধু জাঁকজমকপূর্ণ জীবনই তিনি ভাল বাসতেন না, তাঁর সৌন্দর্য্য বোধ ছিল উচ্চাঙ্গের। এই প্রতিভাবান পুরুষ তাঁর অতুল ঐশ্বর্য্য এক হিসাবে নিজের জীবদ্দশাতেই নিশেধিত করে যান, কেন না ১৮৪৬ খ্রীস্টাব্দে বিলাতে তাঁর মৃত্যু হলে দেখা গেল—তাঁর সম্পত্তির মূল্য সহস্র লক্ষ টাকা আর তাঁর ধনের পরিমাণ এক কোটি টাকা। অল্প দিনে প্রভূত ধন-উপার্জন, আর অজয়্য ব্যয়ের দ্বারা তা নিশেধিত করা, এই হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল ইংরেজ-রাজত্বের সূচনায় শক্তিশালী বাঙালীদের এক ধরনের বৈশিষ্ট্য। মোগল-প্রতাপ তখন অস্তমিত, কিন্তু দেশের উঁচু মহলে মোগল-মেজাজ তখনো অক্ষুণ্ণ।

দ্বারকানাথের জ্যেষ্ঠপুত্র দেবেন্দ্রনাথ (১৮১৭-১৯০৫)—রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরম শ্রদ্ধায় পিতৃদেব—পিতার মৃত্যুকালে ছিলেন উনত্রিশ বৎসর বয়সের যুবক। কিন্তু এই বয়সেই তিনি তাঁর চারপাশের বন্দীদের জীবনযাত্রার দ্বারা ভিড়িয়ে অন্য পথের সন্ধানী হয়েছিলেন। সে-পথ কঠিন জীবন-জিজ্ঞাসার পথ—প্রচলিত কথায় তাকে বলা হয় ধর্মের পথ। পিতার এই নিদারুণ ধাপ আর বহু বিস্তৃত বিষয়-সম্পত্তি দুয়েরই ভার তিনি পরম-শ্রদ্ধায় গ্রহণ করলেন তাঁর জীবন-বিধাতার দান হিসাবে। আর দীর্ঘকালব্যাপী অক্লান্ত চেষ্টায় সেই ধাপ পরিশোধ করে পারিবারিক গোরব পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করলেন—শুধু পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত নয়, তাকে এক নতুন মহিমায় মণ্ডিত করলেন, কেন না, তাঁর কালেই তাঁদের পরিবার অর্জন করলো বাংলার ধর্ম ও সাংস্কৃতিক জীবনে এক অসমরণীয় প্রতিষ্ঠা। তাঁর ধর্মবোধ ও চরিত্র-মাহাত্ম্যে মুগ্ধ হয়ে তাঁর স্বদেশীয়েরা তাঁকে মহর্ষি আখ্যায় ভূষিত করেন। মহর্ষির চিন্তার চরিত্র, সবেদরই প্রভাব রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবনে গভীর।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ মহর্ষির কনিষ্ঠ পুত্র। মহর্ষির অন্যান্য পুত্র-কন্যারা আর ভাতৃস্পুত্রেরাও নানা দিক দিয়ে কৃতী হয়েছিলেন। কোনো পরিবারে প্রায়-একসঙ্গে এত গুণী ব্যক্তির আবির্ভাব ঘটবার ঘটে না। এর ফলে কবির বালা ও কৈশোরে তাঁদের বিপুল পরিবারের শিক্ষা-সাংস্কৃতিক ও চিন্তার ক্ষেত্রে যে অসামান্যতা লাভ হয়েছিল কবির প্রতিভার বিকাশে তার ভূমিকা হয়েছিল খুব অর্থপূর্ণ।

কবির বালা ও কৈশোরের সেই স্মরণীয় লালন-ক্ষেত্রের একটু বিস্তৃত পরিচয় দিতে চেষ্টা করা যাক।

মহাশি দেব

মহাশির গুপ্ত পরিবারের কতী ছিলেন না, সব ব্যাপারে পরিবারের প্রত্যেকের উপরে তাঁর প্রভাব ছিল বিস্ময়কর। পারিবারিক জীবনে তেমন প্রভাবের কথা একালে ভাবা কঠিন। তাঁর চরিত্র-কথা, বিশেষ করে তাঁর আত্মজীবনী ও অন্যান্য রচনা, বর্ষাক্রমাৎ সমগ্র জিজ্ঞাসুদের অবশ্য-পাঠ্য। কবির জন্মের কয়েক বৎসর পূর্ব থেকে মহাশি বিদেশ-সমাগমী সময় কাটিতেন বেশি। কিন্তু বহুকাল প্রবাসে থেকে যখন তিনি বাড়িতে ফিরতেন তখন বাড়ির সবার উপরে তাঁর প্রভাব যেমন তীব্র সেই সময়ে সমগ্র কবি তাঁর ‘জীবনস্মৃতিতে’ লিখেছেন :

“তাঁর প্রভাবে যেন সমগ্র বাড়ি ভরিয়া উঠিয়া গমগম করিতে থাকিত। দেখিতাম গুরুজনেরা গায়ে জেঁকা পরিয়া, সংযত পরিচ্ছন্ন হইয়া, মুখে পানি থাকিলে তাহা বাহিরে ফেলিয়া তাঁহার কাছে যাইতেন। সকলেই সাবধান হইয়া চলিতেন। রন্ধনের পাতে কোনো ত্রুটি হয়, এইজন্য মা নিজে রান্না ঘরে গিয়া বসিয়া থাকিতেন। বুদ্ধ দিনে ফরকরা তাহার তকমাওয়ালা পাগড়ি ও গুঁড় চাপকান পড়িয়া ছাঁড়ির থাকিত। পাতে বারান্দায় গোলমাল, দোড়াদোড়ি করিয়া তাঁহার বিশ্রাম ভঙ্গ করি। এইজন্য পূর্বে আমাদিগকে যত্ন করিয়া দেওয়া হইয়াছে। আমরা ধীরে ধীরে চলি, ধীরে ধীরে বলি, উকি মারিতে আমাদের সাহস হয় না।”

মহাশি সমগ্র বর্ষাক্রমাৎ বাল্যস্মৃতির আরো কিছু অংশ আমরা উদ্ধৃতি করবো।

যা হাঁস যা নীচ সে-সবের প্রতি মহাশির বিতৃষ্ণা কত গভীর ছিল সে সময়ে কবির আঁকা একটি চিত্র এই :

“কোনো একটা বড় ফোঁশনে পাড়ি আসিয়াছে। মিকিট-পরীক্ষক আসিয়া আমাদের মিকিট দেখিল। একবার আমার মুখের দিকে চাহিল। কী একটা সন্দেহ করিল কিয়ৎ বলিতে সাহস করিল না। কিছুক্ষণ পরে আর-একজন আসিল...তীয় বারে বোধহয় স্বয়ং ফোঁশন আসিল আসিয়া উপস্থিত। আমার হৃৎ-মিকিট পরীক্ষা করিয়া পিতাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিল—“এই ছেলের বয়স কি বারো বড়রের অধিক নহে?” পিতা কহিলেন, “না”। তখন আমার বয়স এগারো।...ফোঁশন মাটির কহিল, “ইহার জন্য পুরা ভাড়া দিতে হইবে”। আমার পিতার দুই চক্ষু জ্বলিয়া উঠিল। তিনি বাক্য হইতে তখনই নোচি বাহির করিয়া দিলেন। ভাড়ার টাকা বাদ দিয়া অবশিষ্ট টাকা যখন তাহার ফিরাইয়া দিতে আসিল তিনি সে-টাকা লইয়া ছুড়িয়া ফেলিয়া দিলেন, তাহা প্র্যাটি-ফর্মের মেজের উপরে ছুড়িয়া পড়িয়া বাঁন্বান করিয়া বাজিয়া উঠিল। ফোঁশন মাটির অত্যন্ত সঙ্কচিত হইয়া চলিয়া গেল—টাকা বাঁচাইবার জন্য পিতা যে মিথ্যা কথা বলিবেন, এ সন্দেহের ক্ষুদ্রতা তাঁহার মাথা ছঁট করিয়া ছিল।”

মহাশির অস্থির যেন সব সময়ে চলত বুদ্ধবান। তাঁর বালক-পুত্রের মুখে বুদ্ধাঙ্গীত শুনতে তিনি ভালবাসতেন। কবি লিখেছেন :

“যখন সন্ধ্যা হইয়া আসিত পিতা বাপানের সম্মুখে বারান্দায় আসিয়া বসিতেন। তখন তাঁহাকে বুদ্ধাঙ্গীত শুনাইবার জন্য আমার ডাক পড়িত। চাঁদ উঠিয়াছে, পাঁচের ছায়ার ভিতর দিয়া জ্যোৎস্নার আলো বারান্দার উপর আসিয়া পড়িয়াছে আমি বেহাগের গান গাইতেছি।—

তুমি বিনা কে প্রভু সঙ্কট নিবারে
কে সহায় ভব-অন্ধকারে—

তিনি নিস্তব্ধ হইয়া নতশিরে কোলের উপর দুই হাত ছোড় করিয়া শুনিতেছেন,—সেই সন্ধ্যাবেলাটির ছবি আজও মনে পড়িতেছে”।

গুপ্ত জীবনের বড় আদর্শগুলোর সম্বন্ধে নয়, প্রতিদিনের জীবনে কি করণীয় কি করণীয় নয়, কি গ্রহণীয় কি বর্জনীয়, এমন সম্বন্ধেও মহাশির চেতনা ছিল পথর। কিন্তু নিয়ম-শৃঙ্খলা তিনি যতই ভালবাসেন, সম্ভাবনের স্বাধীন বিকাশ যাতে বাধা না হয় সে দিকেও তিনি ছিলেন তুল্যরূপে প্রবণ। কবি লিখেছেন : “এক একদিন দুপুর বেলায় বাঠি হাতে এক পাছাড় হইতে আর এক পাছাড়ে চলিয়া যাইতাম, পিতা তাহাতে কখনো উল্লেখ প্রকাশ করিতেন না। তাঁহার জীবনের শেষ পর্য্যন্ত ইহা দেখিয়াছি, তিনি কোনো মতেই আমাদের স্বাভাব্য বাধা দিতে চাহিতেন না। তাঁহার রুচি ও মতের বিরুদ্ধে কাজ অনেক করিয়াছি—তিনি ঠাচ্ছা করিলেই শাসন করিয়া তাহা নিবারণ করিতে পারিতেন কিন্তু কখনো তাহা করেন নাই। সত্যকে ও শৌভনকে বাহিরের দিক হইতে লইব ইহাতে তাঁহার মন তৃপ্তি পাইত না—তিনি জানিতেন সত্যকে ভালো বাসিতে না পারিলে সত্যকে গ্রহণ করানই হয় না।”

কবি লিখেছেন, বতদিন তিনি পিতার সঙ্গে পাছাড়ে ছিলেন পিতা রোজ ভোরে তাঁকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে উপনিষদের মধুপাঠ দ্বারা উপাসনা করতেন। শেষরাত্রে উপাসনার জন্য মহাশির নিঃশব্দ জাগরণের এই বর্ণনা কবি দিয়েছেন :

“এক-একদিন জানি না কতরাতে দেখিতাম, পিতা গায়ে একখানি লাল শাল পরিয়া হাতে একটি মোম বাতির সোজ লইয়া নিঃশব্দ সম্বরণে চলিয়াছেন। কাচের আবরণে ধোঁয়া বাহিরের বারান্দায় বসিয়া উপাসনা করিতে যাইতেছেন।

নবযৌবনে পিতাকে স্বরচিত গান শুনাইয়া কবি তাঁর হাতে থেকে পুরস্কার লাভ করেছিলেন। প্রশংসনীয় গর্বের সঙ্গে তিনি সেই ঘটনাটির উল্লেখ করেছেন এইভাবে :

“একবার মাঘোৎসবে (১২৯৩ বঙ্গাব্দ) সকালে ও বিকালে আমি অনেকগুলি গান তৈরি করিয়াছিলাম। তাহার মধ্যে একটি গান—‘নয়ন তোমার পায় না দেখিতে রয়েছে নয়নে নয়নে’। পিতা তখন টুটুড়ায় ছিলেন। সেখানে আমার এবং জ্যোতি-দাদার ডাক পড়িল। হারমনিয়ামে জ্যোতি দাদাকে বসাইয়া আমাকে তিনি নূতন গান সবকটি একে একে গাইতে বলিলেন। কোনো কোনো গান দুবারও গাইতে হইল।

গান গাওয়া যখন শেষ হইল তখন তিনি বলিলেন, “দেশের রাজা যদি দেশের ভাষা জানিত ও সাহিত্যের আদর বুঝিত তবে কবিকে তো তাহার পুরস্কার দিত। রাজার দিক হইতে যখন তাহার কোনো সম্ভাবনা নাই তখন আমাকেই সে-কাজ করিতে হইবে। এই বলিয়া তিনি একখানি পাঁচশ টাকার চেক আমার হাতে দিলেন।

বলা বাহুল্য নবযৌবনে এমন পুরস্কার লাভের অর্থ অনেক। এর পূর্বেই কবি অবশ্য সেই দিনের পার্থক্য-সমাজের সশ্রদ্ধ মনো-যোগ আকর্ষণ করেছিলেন। কিন্তু মহিমাযয় পিতার হাত থেকে এমন পুরস্কার লাভের মর্যাদা সে সবে চাইতে অনেক বেশি ছিল।

মাতা সারদা দেবী

মাতার সান্নিধ্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ বেশি দিন পাননি। তার কারণ, দীর্ঘদিন তিনি অশুস্থ ছিলেন। তিনি যখন পরলোক গমন করেন তখন কবির বয়স বছর চৌদ্দ। মাতার কথা বিতরণিতভাবে তিনি কোথাও উল্লেখ করেন নি। তবে তাঁর স্মৃতিস্বপ্নে মায়ের যতটা ছবি আভাসে ইঙ্গিতে তিনি এঁকেছেন তা থেকে বোঝা যায়, কবি জন্মের খুব নবুত-স্বভাব ও মেহবর্তী ছিলেন। মহর্ষির প্রতি তাঁহার পতীর অনুগত ও অনুগততাও কবির দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে থাকবে। কবি তাঁর সাহিত্যে কল্যাণী নারীর বন্দনা অনেক গিয়েছেন, মহর্ষীমা মাতৃস্মৃতি বহু এঁকেছেন। সে-সবের মূলে তাঁর জননীর স্মৃতি অনেকখানি, এই অনুমান সম্ভব বৈ অসম্ভব নয়।

হেনেদ্রনাথ (১৮৪৪-৮৪)

ইনি ছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের সোজাদাদ। কবির জীবনে ইনি অবিস্মরণীয় এই জন্য যে এর ব্যবস্থাপনার কবির প্রথম জীবনের শিক্ষা দীর্ঘদিন বাংলার মাধ্যমে নিষ্পন্ন হয়। এর সেই ব্যবস্থাপনার জন্য কবি উত্তরকালে তাঁর আত্মবিক্রম ও কৃতিত্ব জ্ঞাপন করেন এই ভাবে : “যখন চারিদিকে কসিয়া ইংরেজি পড়াইবার মূল পড়িয়া গিয়াছে তখন তিনি সাহস করিয়া আমাদিগকে দীর্ঘকাল বাংলা শিখাইবার ব্যবস্থা করিয়াছিলেন সেই আমার স্বর্গগত সোজাদাদর উদ্দেশ্যে সন্তুঃ প্রণাম নিবেদন করিতেছি।”

এই ব্যবস্থা কবির সাহিত্য-সাধনার জন্য বিশেষ অনুকূল হয়েছিল, কেননা, অপেক্ষাকৃত অল্প বয়সেই তাঁর বাংলা রচনা স্বপরিণতি দিকে গিয়েছিল। কবিও বলেছেন : “ডেলেবেলায় বাংলা পড়িতেছিলাম বলিয়াই সমস্ত মনোনিবেশ চালনা সম্ভব হইয়াছিল। শিক্ষা-জিনিসটা যথাসম্ভব আহার-ব্যাপারের মতো হওয়া উচিত। খাদ্যদ্রব্য প্রথম কামডান দিবানাত্রই তার স্বাদের তথ্য আরম্ভ হয়; পোষ্ট ভরিবার পূর্ব হইতে পোষ্টটি পুশি হইয়া জাপিয়া উঠে—তাহাতে তাহার জরক রসগুলির আনন্দ দূর হইয়া যায়। বাঙালীর পক্ষে ইংরেজি শিক্ষায় সেটাই হইবার জো নেই।

গৃহ-শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থা

স্কুল কলেজের শিক্ষা কবির মনকে কোনোদিন আকর্ষণ করতে পারে নি। বার বার তিনি বলেছেন, তিনি স্কুল-পালানো ছেলে। ডেলেবেলায় ভৃত্যদের তত্ত্বাবধানে তাঁর দিন যেন অনেকটা বন্দীভাবে কাটিত, একলা মনে জানালায় বসে কেমন করে তিনি দীর্ঘ সময় কাটিতেন জানালায় বাইরের পুকুর পাড়ের বাঁগাচ, নারকেল গাছ দুচারটা ফুলের গাছ, পুকুরের গুপ্তি খেয়ে বেড়ানো রাজহাস ও পাঁচিহাস, স্নানার্থীদের স্নানের বিচিত্র ভঙ্গি, এ সব দেখে—তার চিত্তগ্রাহী বর্ণনা তাঁর জীবনস্মৃতিতে রয়েছে। ডেলেবেলায় কবি খুব শান্ত প্রকৃতির ছিলেন, বলা যায় অনেকটা কুণোণ্ড ছিলেন,—আকাশ আলো মেঘ গাছপালা, প্রকৃতির এসব শোভা-সৌন্দর্য যতটা দেখতে পেতেন ততটাই একলা মনে এক অসাধারণ আনন্দের উদ্ভীর্ণনা অনুভব করতেন।

সে-অনুভূতি এমন যে বড় হয়ে বার বার সে-সবের কথা তিনি স্মরণ করেছেন। সেইদিনের স্কুলের শিক্ষকদের ক্রটি ভাষাও ব্যবহার আর সহপাঠীদের নিরীহতা যে এমন কোমল প্রভৃতির বা লোকের মন স্কুলের প্রতি বিমুগ্ধ করে তুলবে এ অনেকটা আভাবিক। একজন হৃদয়বান ও আদর্শবান শিক্ষকের স্মৃতি কিন্তু চিরদিন কবির মনে জাগরুক ছিল। তাঁর সন্ধানে তিনি লিখেছেন : “(সেন্ট জেভিয়ার্সের) ফাদার ডি পেনেরাডার সহিত আমাদের যোগ তেমন বেশি ছিল না :—বোম করি কিছুদিন তিনি আমাদের নিয়মিত শিক্ষকের বদলিরূপে কাজ করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি জাতিতে স্পেনীয় ছিলেন। ইংরেজি উচ্চারণে তাঁহার যথেষ্ট বাধা ছিল। বোম করি সেই কারণে তাঁহার ক্লাসের শিক্ষায় চাতুর্য যথেষ্ট মনোযোগ করিত না। আমার বোম হইত চাত্রদের সেই উদার্যোনের বাধাও তিনি মনের মধ্যে অনুভব করিতেন। কিন্তু মনুভাবে প্রতিদিন তাহা সহ্য করিয়া লইতেন।...আমি ঘণ্টা আমাদের কপি লিখিবার সময় ছিল—আমি তখন কলম হাতে লইয়া অনামনস্ক হইয়া যাহা-তাহা ভাবিতাম। একদিন ফাদার-ডি পেনেরাডা এই ক্লাসের অধ্যক্ষতা করিতেছিলেন। তিনি প্রত্যেক বেকির পিছনে পদচারণা করিয়া সাইতাইছিলেন। বোম করি তিনি দুই-তিন বার লক্ষ্য করিয়াছিলেন, আমার কলম যারিতেছেন। এক সময়ে আমার পিছনে গামিয়া দাঁড়াইয়া নত হইয়া আমার পিঠে তিনি হাত রাখিলেন এবং খতাপ্ত সম্মুখ-দ্বরে আমাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, “নিগোর, তোমার কি শরীর ভাল নাই।”—বিশেষ কিছুই নাহে কিন্তু আজ পর্যন্ত তাহার সেই প্রশ্নটি ভুলি নাই। অন্য চাত্রদের কথা বলিতে পারি না কিন্তু আমি তাহার ভিতরকার একটা বৃহৎ মনকে দেখিতে পাইতাম—আজও তাহা স্মরণ করিলে আমি যেন নিভৃত নিস্তক দেবমন্দিরের মধ্যে প্রবেশ করিবার অধিকার পাই।”

স্কুলের শিক্ষা কবির জন্য ফলপ্রসূ না হলেও গৃহে তাঁর জন্য যে শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা হয়েছিল, কিছু কিছু এটি সত্ত্বেও তাকে সফল বুলতে হবে। কবি লিখেছেন :

“ভাষে অন্ধকার থাকিতে উঠিয়া লোটি পরিয়া প্রথমেই এক কান্দা পালোরানের সঙ্গে কৃষ্টি করিতে হইত। তাহার পরে সেই মাটিমাগা শরীরের উপরে জামা পরিয়া পদার্থ বিদ্যা, মেঘনাদ বন কাব্য, জ্যামিতি, গণিত, ইতিহাস, ভূগোল শিখিতে হইত। স্কুল হইতে ফিরিয়া আসিলেই ড্রয়িং এবং জিমনাস্টিকের মাফটার আমাদিগকে লইয়া পড়িতেন। যক্ষার সময় ইংরেজি পড়াইবার জন্য অধোরবাবু আসিতেন। এইরূপে রাত্রি নব্বই পর চুটি পাইতাম।”

রবিবার সকালে শুভ্রাদ বিষ্ণু চক্রবর্তীর কাছে তাঁরা গান শিখতেন। কিছুদিন সোবালের বিখ্যাত গায়ক যদু ভট্টের কাছে গান শিখবার সন্মোখও কবির হয়েছিল। যদুভট্ট সন্ধানে কবি বলেছেন—“গান তাঁর অন্তরের সিংহাসনে রাজ্য মর্মান্বয় ছিল।”—অবশ্য বিধিবদ্ধভাবে সঙ্গীত শিক্ষা কবির তেমন হয়নি। সে কথা তিনি বহুবার বলেছেন। তবে কবি-পতিভার মতো সঙ্গীত-প্রতিভাও ছিল তাঁর সহজাত। তিনি লিখেছেন—“কবে যে গান পাছিতে পারিতাম না তাহা মনে পড়ে না।” ডেলেবেলায় তাঁর গান পাইবার সহজ পট্টর সন্ধানে মধ্যি বলেছিলেন—“রবি আমাদের বাংলাদেশের বুলবুল।” সেই সহজাত প্রতিভার সঙ্গে এমন প্রতিভাবান সঙ্গীতচাতারের নৈকট্য লাভ ও যে তাঁর জীবনে ঘটেছিল এটি হয়েছিল এক অসাধারণ অনুকূল যোগ।

গৃহে তাঁদের জন্য বিজ্ঞান-শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থাও হয়েছিল। যে যদ্বন্ধে কবি লিখেছেন :

“প্রায় মারো মারো মাতানাত দত্ত (মোম ?) মহাশয় আসিয়া যন্ত্রতন্ত্র যোগে প্রাকৃতিকজ্ঞান শিক্ষা দিতেন। এই শিক্ষাটি আমার কাছে বিশেষ উৎকৃষ্টজনক ছিল। জ্বল দিবস সময় ত্রাপসংযোগে পাত্রে নিচের জল পাতলা হইয়া উপরে উঠে উপরের ভারি জল নিচে নামিতে থাকে, এবং এই জন্যই জল নিগবণ করে—ইহাই যেদিন তিনি কাচপাত্রে জলে কাঠের গুড়া দিয়া আগুন চড়াইয়া প্রত্যক্ষ দেখাইয়া দিলেন সেদিন মনের মধ্যে যে বিরূপ বিষয় অনুভব করিয়াছিলাম তাহা আজও স্পষ্ট মনে আছে। দুই মনে মধ্যে জল জ্বলিয়া যে একটি স্বতন্ত্র বস্তু, জ্বল দিলে সোঁ বাষ্প আকারে মুক্তলাভ করে বলিয়াই দুঃখ পাচ্ছি, এ-কথাটাও যেদিন স্পষ্ট বুঝিলাম সেদিনও ভারি আনন্দ হইয়াছিল। যে-রবিবারে সকালে তিনি না আসিতেন, সে-রবিবার আমার কাছে রবিবার বলিয়াই মনে হইত না।

ইহা ছাড়া ক্যান্বেল মেডিকেল স্কুলের একটি ছাত্রের কাছে কোনো-এক সময়ে স্বস্থি-বিদ্যা শিখিতে আরম্ভ করিলাম। তাঁর দিয়া ছোড়া একটি নরকফাল কিনিয়া আনিয়া আমাদের স্কুল ঘরে লটকাইয়া দেওয়া হইল।”

ঢেলেবেলাই যে বৈজ্ঞানিক কৌতুহল কবির ভিতরে উদ্ভিত হইয়াছিল তাঁর জীবন ও প্রতিভায় এর ফল হয়েছিল স্পষ্টরূপসারী। হয়ত এর প্রভাবেই জীবনে সহজভাবে এক প্রবল কল্পনার বশীভূত হয়েও কবি বাস্তব-বিশ্বের কখনো হয় নি। তাঁর রচনার বিষয়কর বৈচিত্র্য, কৃষি, ফলের চাষ, শিক্ষা, পল্লীসংগঠন, প্রভৃতি নামা ক্ষেত্রে উত্তরকালে তাঁর বহু সফল ও বিফল পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা, এ সবের অর্থ অনেকটা বোঝা যায় তাঁর জীবনে কল্পনা ও বৈজ্ঞানিক কৌতুহলের এই আদ্যোপায়ে কথা ভাবলে। বিজ্ঞান যদ্বন্ধে কৌতুহল সারা জীবনই তাঁর ভিতরে প্রবল ছিল।

মেঘনাদ বংশের মধ্যে কাব্য যে প্রধানত ভাষা শিক্ষার জন্য অল্প বয়সে তাঁকে পড়তে হয়েছিল, এইটি অবশ্য সেই শিক্ষার দুর্বল দিক বলেই গণ্য করতে হবে। কিন্তু দোষের চাইতে গুণের ভাগ কবির এই ঢেলেবেলাকার গৃহের শিক্ষা-ব্যবস্থায় যে বাস্তবিকই বেশি ছিল তাতে সন্দেহ নেই। তাঁর গৃহশিক্ষক জ্ঞানচক্ৰ ভট্টাচার্য তাঁকে দিয়ে ঢেলেবেলায় কালিদাসের কুমারসম্ভব মুখস্থ করান, শেক্ষপীয়রের ম্যাকবেথ তর্জমা করান, আর রাম সর্বস্ব পণ্ডিত মশায় তাঁকে সংস্কৃত শব্দগুলি পড়িয়ে দেন। এমন সহৃদয় ও দৃষ্টি সম্পন্ন শিক্ষকদের অধীনে শিক্ষা লাভের সুযোগ শিক্ষার্থীদের জীবনে বিরল ঘটনা।

এসবের সঙ্গে অবশ্য ভাবতে হবে ঢেলেবেলা থেকেই কবির গ্রহণ করবার অসাধারণ ক্ষমতার কথা—গ্রহণ করবার ক্ষমতা প্রতিভার এক বড় লক্ষণ। তাঁর জীবনস্মৃতিতে আমরা দেখি ঢেলেবেলা থেকেই তাঁর বই পড়ার প্রবল নেশা—রাত জেগে বই পড়ছেন দেখে তাঁর বড়দিদি বাতি নিভিয়ে দিয়ে তাঁকে বিছানায় পাঠিয়ে দিতেন। সেই দিনের যত বাংলা বই—বৈষ্ণব পদাবলী ও কালীপ্রসন্ন সিংহের মহাভারত সমেত—সবই তিনি অল্প বয়সে পড়েছিলেন। বৈষ্ণব-পদাবলী কতটা যত্ন নিয়ে তিনি পড়েছেন তার পরিচয় রয়েছে তাঁর ‘ভানুসিংহ ঠাকুরের পদাবলী’তে।

গৃহের উৎকৃষ্ট শিক্ষা-ব্যবস্থা, কবির উৎকৃষ্ট স্বাস্থ্য, তাঁর গ্রহণ করবার অসাধারণ ক্ষমতা, এসবের সঙ্গে যোগ ঘটিছিল আর একটি বড় বাপোলেরও—একটি উদ্দীপক সংস্কৃতিক পরি-

মণ্ডলে ঢেলেবেলা থেকে কবির বেড়ে ওঠার সুযোগ। সেই পরিমণ্ডলের মনোস্তম্ভ বর্ণনা তাঁর জীবনস্মৃতিতে রয়েছে। সেখানে অনেককে আমরা পাই; তবে তাঁদের মধ্যে বিশিষ্ট হচ্ছেন এই চারজন গুণী—অক্ষয় চন্দ্র চৌধুরী, কবির অগ্রজ, দ্বিজেন্দ্র নাথ ও জ্যোতিরেজ নাথ, আর তাঁদের পরিবারের প্রিয় কবি বিহারীলাল চক্রবর্তী। কবির চিত্তগঠনে এঁদের কার কাছ থেকে কি ধরনের আনুকূল্য জীবন-প্রভাতে তাঁর লাভ হয়েছিল তার দিকে একটি তাকানো যাক।

অক্ষয় চন্দ্র চৌধুরী (১৮৫০-১৮৯৮)।

অক্ষয় চন্দ্র চৌধুরী ছিলেন জ্যোতিরেজনাথের সহপাঠি বন্ধু। যেমন ইংরেজি কাব্যে তেমনি বিভিন্ন যুগের বাংলা কাব্যে তাঁর অনুরাগ ছিল অনন্যসাধারণ। সেই অনুরাগ যদ্বন্ধে কবি লিখেছেন :

“আনন্দ উপভোগ করিবার শক্তি ইহার অসামান্য উদার ছিল। প্রাণ ভরিয়া রস গ্রহণ করিতে তাহার কোনো বাধা ছিল না এবং মন খুলিয়া গুণগ্রাণ করিবার বেলায় ইনি কাপণ্য করিতে জানিতেন না। গান এবং খণ্ড কাব্য লিখিতেও তাহার ক্ষিপ্ততা অসাধারণ ছিল।....উদাসিনী নামে তাহার একখানি কাব্য। তখনকার বঙ্গদর্শনে যথেষ্ট প্রশংসা লাভ করিয়াছিল।.....সাহিত্যভোগের অকৃত্রিম উৎসাহ সাধিতো পাণ্ডিত্যের চেয়ে অনেক বেশি দুর্লভ। অক্ষয়বাবুর সেই অপরিপুষ্ট উৎসাহ আমাদের সাহিত্যিক বোধ-শক্তিকে সচেতন করিয়া তুলিতে।.....বালকদের দলে তিনি বালক ছিলেন। দাদাদের সভা হইতে যখন অনেক রাতে বিদায় লইতেন তখন কতদিন আমি তাঁহাকে থেক্তার করিয়া আমাদের স্কুলে ঘরে লিনিয়া আনিয়াছি। সেখানেও রেডির তেলের মিনিমিটে আলোতে আমাদের পড়িবার টেবিলের উপর বসিয়া সভা জমাইয়া তুলিতে তাঁহার কোনো কুঠা ছিল না। এমনি করিয়া তাঁহার কাছে কত ইংরেজি কাব্যের উচ্ছৃঙ্খিত ব্যাখ্যা শুনিয়াছি, তাঁহাকে লইয়া কত তর্ক বিতর্ক আলোচনা-সমালোচনা করিয়াছি।—নিজের লেখা তাঁহাকে কত শুনাইয়াছি এবং সেই লেখার মধ্যে যদি সামান্যতম গুণপনা থাকিত তবে তাহা লইয়া তাঁহার কাছে কত অপরিপুষ্ট প্রশংসা লাভ করিয়াছি।

দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথ (১৮৩৮-১৯২৫)

বর্ধীজনাথের বড়দাদা দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথ দার্শনিকরূপেই পরিচিত। কিন্তু যৌবনে কবি রূপেও তিনি খ্যাতি অর্জন করেছিলেন তাঁর সেইদিনের ভাবেভালা আনন্দময় কবিস্মৃতি জীবনস্মৃতিতে হৃদ্যরূপ পেয়েছে। কবি বলেছেন :

“বড়দাদা তখন দক্ষিণের বারান্দায় বিছানা পাতিয়া সামনে একটি ছোট ডেস্ক লইয়া স্বপ্নপ্রায় লিখিতে ছিলেন। গুণ-দাদাও রোজ সকালে আমাদের সেই দক্ষিণের বারান্দায় আসিয়া বসিতেন.....বড়দাদা লিখিতেছেন আর শুনাইতেছেন, আর তাঁহার ঘন ঘন উচ্চহাস্যে বারান্দা কাঁপিয়া উঠিতেছে। বসন্তর আমের বোল যেমন অকালে অজন্ম বাড়িয়া পড়িয়া গাছের তলা ছাড়া ফেলে, তেমনি স্বপ্ন প্রয়াণের কত পরিত্যক্ত পত্র বাড়িময় ছড়াছড়ি যাইত তাহার ঠিকানা নাই.....বড়দার লেখনী মুখে তখন চন্দের ভাষার কল্পনার একেবারে কোটালের জোয়ার-বান ডাকিয়া আসিত, নব নব অশ্রুত তরঙ্গের কলোচ্ছ্বাসে কল-উপকূল মুখরিত হইয়া উঠিত। স্বপ্ন প্রয়াণের সব কি আমরা বুঝিতাম।” কিন্তু..... লাভ করিবার জন্য পুরাপুরি বুঝিবার প্রয়োজন করে না। সমুদ্রের



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কূল পাইতাম কিনা জানি না, পাইলেও তাহার মূল্য বুঝিতাম না কিন্তু মনের সাধ মিটিয়া যেতে খাইতাম—তাহারই আনন্দ-আশাতে শিরা-উপশিরায় জীবনযোত চকল হইয়া উঠিত।

দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথের ভাবেভোলা, খুব আশোচালো অথচ অস্তুর-অস্তুর-আদর্শ নিগূতো-দৃঢ় প্রকৃতি যে কবির বিশেষ শ্রদ্ধা আকর্ষণ করেছিল কবির বহু রচনায় আমরা তা দেখি। দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথের একদিনের উপদেশ কিশোর রবীন্দ্রনাথের মনের উপরে কেমন একটা স্থায়ী প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছিল সে কথা ব্যক্ত হয়েছে জীবন-স্মৃতির এই কটি বর্ণিত চিত্রে।

“যখন আমার বয়স নিতান্তই অল্প ছিল এবং দৃষ্টি দুর্বল আমার জ্ঞানকেও স্পর্শ করে নাই, এমন সময় একদিন বড়দাদা তাহার ঘরে ডাকিয়া ইজিয়া সংঘম ও নৃপাচর্য পালন সম্বন্ধে খুব স্পষ্ট করিয়া সতর্ক করিয়া দিয়াছিলেন। তাহার উপদেশ আমার মনে এমনি গাঁথিয়া গিয়াছিল যে, নৃপাচর্য হইতে খলন আমার কাছে বিভাগিকার স্বরূপ হইয়াছিল। বোধ করি, এইজন্য বাল্য-বয়সে অনেক সময়ে আমার জ্ঞান ও কল্পনা যখন বিপদের পথ দিয়া গেছে যখন আমার সঙ্কোচ পরায়ণ আচরণ নিজেকে বস্তুত হইতে রক্ষা করিবার চেষ্টা করিয়াছে।”

এই কটি চিত্রে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চরিত্রের একটি বিশেষ দিকের ইঙ্গিত আছে।

জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ (১৮৪৯-১৯২৫)

রবীন্দ্রনাথের কিশোর মনের বিকাশে জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ কবির অগ্রদূতের মতো বোধহয় সব চাইতে অধাপূর্ণ ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। তাঁর সম্পর্কে কবি বলেছেন :

“সাহিত্যের শিক্ষায় ভাবের চর্চায় বাল্যকাল হইতে জ্যোতি-দাদা আমার প্রধান সহায় ছিলেন...তিনি আমাকে খুব একটা বড় রকমের স্বাধীনতা দিয়াছিলেন, তাহার সাহায্যে আমার ভিতরকার সঙ্কোচ দূরীয়া গিয়াছিল। এইরূপ স্বাধীনতা আমাকে আর কেহ দিতে সাহস করিতে পারিত না—সেজন্য হয়ত কেহ কেহ তাঁহাকে নিন্দাও করিয়াছেন। কিন্তু প্রথম গ্রীষ্মের পরে পর্যায় যেন পরোজন আমার পক্ষে আশীশব সান্নিধ্যের পরে এই স্বাধীনতা তেমনি অপ্রাশংসক ছিল।...শাসনের দ্বারা পাঁড়নের দ্বারা কাননলা এবং কানে মন্ত্র দেওয়ার তরঙ্গারা, আমাকে বাহ্য কিছু দেওয়া হইয়াছে তাহা আমি কিছুই গ্রহণ করি নাই। যতক্ষণ আমি আপনার মতো আপনি চাড়া না পাইয়াছি ততক্ষণ নিউক বেদনা চাড়া আর কিছু লাভ করিতে পারি নাই। জ্যোতিদাদাই সম্পূর্ণ নিঃসঙ্কোচে সমস্ত ভালোমন্দের মধ্য দিয়া আমাকে আমার আত্মপলঙ্কিত ক্ষেত্রে চাড়িয়া দিয়াছিলেন এবং তখন হইতেই আমার আপন শক্তি নিজের কঁাটা ও নিজের কুল বিকাশ করিবার জন্য প্রস্তুত হইতে পারিয়াছে।”

জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ দ্বারা বাঘ শিকারের মতো বিপদজনক কাজেও কিশোর রবীন্দ্রনাথকে সঙ্গে নিয়েছিলেন। সেই দুই শিকার-যাত্রার একটির বর্ণনা কবি দিয়েছেন এইভাবে :

“আরও একবার বাঘ এসেছিল শিলাইদহের জঙ্গলে। আমরা দুইভাই যাত্রা করলুম তার খোঁজে, হাতির পিঠে চড়ে।—তার আগেই বিশ্বনাথের ভাই চানকর কাছে গর গুনেছিলুম, সর্বোপায়ে বাপার হয় বাঘ যখন লাফ দিয়ে হাতির পিঠে চড়ে থাবা বসিয়া ধরে। তখন হাতি গোঁ গোঁ শব্দে ছুটে খাকে বন-জঙ্গলের ভিতর দিয়ে, পিঠে যারা থাকে গুঁড়ির দাকায় তাদের

হাত পা মাথার হিসেব পাওয়া যায় না। যেদিন হাতির উপর চড়ে বসে মনের মধ্যে ছিল ঐ হাড়-খোড় ভাঙার চব্বি। ভয় করানি চেপে রাখলুম লজ্জায়, বেপরোয়া ভাব দেখিয়ে চাইতে লাগলুম এদিকে ওদিকে.....তুকে পড়লো হাতি ঘন জঙ্গলের মধ্যে।.....জ্যোতিদাদা বাঘটিকে ধাক্কা দিয়ে মরিয়া করে তুলবেন, নিশ্চয় এটিই ছিল তাঁর (আমাদের সঙ্গে শিকারির) সবচেয়ে ভাবনার কথা। হঠাৎ বাঘটা বোপের ভিতর থেকে দিল এক লাফ। যেন মেঘের ভিতর থেকে বেরিয়ে পড়লো বজ্রওয়ালা ঝড়ের ঝাপটা। আমাদের বেড়াল, কুকুর, শেয়াল দেখা মজর—এসে ঘাড়ে পড়ানে একটা একরাশ মুরদ, অথচ তাঁর ভাব নেই যেন। খোলা মাঠের ভিতর দিয়ে দুপুর বেলায় বোদে চললো যে দৌড়ে। কী সন্দেহ সহজ চলনের বেগ। মাঠে কখন ছিল না। ছুঁইত বাঘকে ভরপুর করে দেখবার জায়গা এই বটে—সেই রোজি ঢালা হলদে রঙের প্রকাণ্ড মাঠ।”

“বহুদূর” কবিতায় এক জায়গায় কবি বাঘের জীবন-লীলার অপূর্ণ বর্ণনা দিয়েছেন। তেমন বর্ণনার মূলে কবির ছেলেবেলাকার এমন অভিজ্ঞতা যে অনেকখানি তা বোঝা যাচ্ছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের দাদারা দিদিরা এবং বৌদিদিরাও নতুন অনেক-কিছুর প্রবর্তনা করেন। কিন্তু তাঁদেরও মধ্যে জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথকে বলা যায় বিপ্লবী। পরিবারের মেয়েদের অবলম্ব প্রথম খোচান গিভিলিয়ান যতেন্দ্রনাথ। সেই ক্ষেত্রে জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ আরো অনেকদূর অগ্রগত হন। তিনি ও তাঁর স্ত্রী দুইটি আর রবি শোড়ায় চড়ে লাড়ি থেকে গাড়ের মাঠে যেতেন বিস্মিত জনতার সামনে দিয়ে, আর মাঠে গিয়ে বেগে খোড়া ছোঁমিতেন। একসময়ে পিয়ানো বাজিয়ে নতুন নতুন সুর তিনি তৈরি করেছিলেন—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও অক্ষয় চন্দ্র চৌধুরী সেই সুরগুলোতে কথা যোজনা করতেন। জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথের স্বদেশী-জাতীয় পরিচালনা ও সেক্ষেত্রে প্রায় সর্বাঙ্গ হওয়ার কথা উল্লিখিত। একটি জাতীয় পোষাক উদ্ভাবনের ও পালনের চেষ্টাও তিনি করেছিলেন—তাঁর সাক্ষাতক বর্ণনা কবির জীবনস্মৃতিতে আছে। এমন বিপ্লবের ভূমিকায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবশ্য কখনো দাঁড়ান নি। তবে শেষ পর্যন্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরিচয় এই যে তিনি একজন শ্রেষ্ঠ বিপ্লবী। বিচিত্র নতুন পথে চলার অক্লান্ত উদ্যমের দৃষ্টান্ত যে কবির অগ্রশ্র-ভালে লাভ হয়েছিল তাঁর জ্যোতিদাদার কাছ থেকে তা স্বীকার করতে হবে।—এক সময়ে জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ নাট্যকার রূপে প্রচুর খ্যাতির অধিকারী হয়েছিলেন। পরবর্তীকালে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অবশ্য সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে তাঁকে অতিক্রম করে বহুদূর অগ্রগত হন। কিন্তু প্রবল জাতীয়তাবাদে এবং নিজে আত্মরিকভাবে জাতীয়তার সমর্থক হয়েও জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর ‘অশ্রমভী’ নাটকে উদার-মানবিকতার যে অপূর্ণ সুর প্রবর্তিত করতে পেরেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের নব উত্তর সঙ্গীর পক্ষে তা অমূল্য পথের কাঁজ করেছিল।

বিহারীলাল চক্রবর্তী (১৮৩৫-১৯৪১)

জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথের পত্নী মনস্বিনী কাদম্বরী দেবী কিশোর কবির সাহিত্য-সাধনায় যে একজন বড় সঙ্গী ছিলেন রবীন্দ্র-রচনায় বহুভাবে সে কথা উল্লিখিত হয়েছে। কিন্তু কবির সাহিত্য-সাধনায় তাঁর ‘নতুন বৌঠানের’ শ্রেষ্ঠদান হয়ত এই যে সেদিনের নতুন কবি বিহারী-লালের রচনার প্রতি তিনি তরুণ কবির সম্বন্ধ মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করতে পেরেছিলেন। তরুণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপরে বিহারী-লালের প্রভাব যে লক্ষ্যনীয় হয়েছিল তাঁর উল্লেখ কবির বহুলেখ্য

রয়েছে— আমাদের অনেক সমালোচক ও যেকথা বলেছেন। বিহারীলাল ছিলেন ভাবভোলা কবি। বিশ্বেশ্বরপ্রতি আর নিজের প্রেমপ্রতি— পূর্ণ অস্তর এই দুইদিক তিনি জানতেন—মানুষের সমাজের নানা ধরনের প্রাণবোধ,—প্রাণিত্ব-প্রতিপত্তির জন্য স্বস্তান্বেষিত, সব থেকে তিনি ছিলেন আশ্চর্য্যভাবে মুক্ত। বিহারীলালের এই ভাবভোলা প্রেমপূর্ণ প্রকৃতি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে বিশেষভাবে আকর্ষণ করেছিল। কবি তাঁর সম্বন্ধে বলেছেন :

“তাঁহার মনো পরিপূর্ণ একটি কবির আনন্দ ছিল। যখনই তাঁহার কাছে গিয়াছি, সেই আনন্দের ছাওয়া পাঁছা আসিয়াছি।.... আমি বালক হইলেও এমন একটি উদার হৃদয়তার সম্মুখে তিনি আমাকে আশ্রয় করিয়া লইতেন যে, মনে লেশমাত্র সন্দেহ থাকিত না।”

কিছু বিহারীলাল একালে জন্মালেও তাঁর মনটি ছিল প্রকৃত-পক্ষে সেকালের। মোকদ্দমার বা তাঁর ইন্দ্রের ধামে নিঃশেষে ডুবে যাওয়া তাঁর পক্ষে ছিল অসম্ভব সহজ। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্মুখ থেকে নিম্নস্থ ছিলেন সত্যত, আর অসম্মুখ থেকে প্রকাশ পেল— বদ্বিত্ত ভাবভগ্ন তাঁর বেশি প্রিয় তবু সেই ভাববিভোরতার সম্মুখে বাস্তবক্ষেত্রের মানুষের প্রতি ও বাস্তব জগতের প্রতি তাঁর আকর্ষণ বা তাদের সম্বন্ধে তাঁর চেতনা কম প্রবল নয়। নিজের প্রকৃতির এই বিশেষত্ব সম্বন্ধে উত্তরকালে তিনি একখানি চিঠিতে লেখেন :

“আমি দেখেছি আমি যখন মফস্বলে থাকি তখন পশুপক্ষী জীবজন্তু আমার ভাবী নিকটবর্তী হয়ে আসে— আপনাকে তাদের চেয়ে খুব বেশি দ্রুত কিংবা উচ্চতরের মনে হয় না। একটি বৃহৎ মনপ্রাণী মহাসমগ্রী প্রকৃতির কাছে আমার সম্মুখে অন্য জীবের প্রভেদ অকিঞ্চিৎকর সামান্য বলে উপলব্ধি হয়।.....ভারতবর্ষীয়েরা জন্মক্রমে মানুষ থেকে জন্তু এবং জন্তু থেকে মানুষ হওয়া কিছুই মনে করে না—কীটপতঙ্গ পর্যন্ত প্রাণী মাছেরই একটা সম-প্রাণী তা আছে, সোঁতা তাঁরা খুব অনুভব করে। এই জন্য আমাদের শাস্ত্রে সর্বভূতে দয়া একটা অসম্ভব আশিষ্য বলে পরিতোষ হয়নি। মফস্বলে উদার প্রকৃতির মাঝখানে এলে, তার সম্মুখে দেখে দেখে ঘনিষ্ঠ সংস্পর্শ হলে আমার সেই ভারতবর্ষীয় প্রভাবটি জাগ্রত হইয়া উঠে—আমি জীব জন্তুর স্বপ্নদুঃখের মনো প্রবেশ করিতে পারি। সামান্য কুণা নিবারণের জন্য পাখির মাংস খেতে গেলে আমার নিজের শাবকদের কথা মনে পড়ে। একটি পাখির

জ্বলন্ত পালকে আবৃত স্পন্দমান ক্ষুদ্রবক্ষটুকুর মধ্যে জীবনের আনন্দ যে কত প্রবল তা আর আমি অচেতনভাবে ভুলে থাকতে পারি নে। সেই জন্য প্রতিবারই মফস্বলে এলে মাংস খাওয়ার প্রতি আমার আন্তরিক বিকার জন্মে, আমার কলকাতার জন-সমাজের মধ্যে গিয়ে মাংসাশী হয়ে উঠি। সেখানে মানুষ ছাড়া সমস্ত সজীব প্রাণী জড়ের সমান হয়ে আসে। পাড়াগায়ে আমি ভারতবর্ষীয় ছই, আর কলকাতায় গিয়ে যুরোপীয় হয়ে যাই। কোন্টি আমার যথার্থ প্রকৃতি কে জানে?”

বিহারীলালের রচনার অভ্যন্তরীণ কিছু প্রাণপূর্ণ ভঙ্গি রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রকাশ-ভঙ্গির উপরে যে গভীর প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছিল তা নিঃসন্দেহ। মধুসূদন থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পর্যন্ত আমাদের সাহিত্যে ভাষা ও ভাবের যে লক্ষণীয় ব্যবধান তার ভিতরে যেতুর কাজ করেছিলেন বিহারীলাল। কিছু বিহারীলালের প্রভাব যে সন্ন্যাসদীপ্তের সময় থেকেই কবি প্রতিভা ফুলিয়া উঠে সে কথা তিনি নিজেই বলেছেন।

অসামান্য যৌবন রবীন্দ্রনাথের কিশোর মনকে প্রভাবিত করেছিলেন তাঁরা ছাড়াও ডাঃ রাধেন্দ্রলাল মিত্র, রাজনারায়ণ বসু, প্রমোদনাথ ঠাকুর আর কবির পিতার বন্ধু ও ভক্ত শ্রীকৃষ্ণ সিংহ। বিশ্বেশ্বরপ্রতি বা অন্যের এই যে প্রভাব এর সম্মুখে কবির যত্নজীবনে কার্যকর হয়েছিল আরো দুইটি বড় প্রভাব—জীবন ও জগৎ সম্বন্ধে তাঁর সদাঙ্গপ্রতি কৌতূহল আর মানুষের জন্য, সমস্ত জগতের জন্য, তাঁর অকুরন্ত শুভকামনা—সেই শুভকামনার বিচিএ শুভসামন্য রূপান্তরিত হবার জন্য আকৃতি।—বাল্য ও কৈশোরে যেসব মহাপ্রাণ ব্যক্তির নিবিড় সান্নিধ্য কবির লাভ হয়, অন্যের গভীর বোধ, জগৎ ও জীবন সম্বন্ধে অকুরন্ত কৌতূহল আর সবার জন্য নিবিড় শুভ-কামনা, কবির অস্ত্রায়ার সক্রিয় এই তিনটি প্রভাবের পঞ্চমণ্ডিকে বলা যেতে পারে কবির ভারতীয় উত্তরাধিকার থেকে লব্ধ মহাসম্পদ, আর পরের দুটিকে বলা যেতে পারে একালের বা ইরোরোপের সাধনা থেকে লব্ধ পরম-অপূর্ণ বৈভব। রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের কাল থেকে ইরোরোপের এই শ্রেষ্ঠ বৈভবের দিকে শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালীদের দৃষ্টি আকৃষ্ট হয়। তা যেখান থেকেই লাভ হোক এই তিন মহাসম্পদের বা প্রভাবের অঙ্গাঙ্গী যোগ ঘটেছিল কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথের অন্তর্লোকে—সেইটিই বিশেষভাবে লক্ষ্য করবার বিষয়। তাঁর প্রতিভার বিশেষকর প্রাণবতার ও বৈচিত্র্যের মূলে সেই মহাযোগ।

তীর্থ পথিক

তুমি যুগের শ্রেষ্ঠ যুগে বিশ্বের বিষয়,
তব পুনঃপানে ভাষা গুর যেন যব হয়ে যায় লয়।
তুমি সমরিখাও ভক্তের তব এই গৌরবখানি
নাথিব কোথায় ভেবে নাহি পাই, আনন্দে মুক বাণী।
প্রাণনা মোর যদি আরবার জন্ম এ বরণীতে,
আমি যেন শুধু গাছন করিতে তোমার কাব্য গীতে ॥

—কাজি নজরুল ইসলাম

শিলাইদহ থেকে শ্রীমিকেতন

ক্ষিতীশ রায়



১৮৯০। আমার সেই শিলাইদহ। একদিকে তার পদা। প্রমত্তা-নদী অন্যদিকে অখ্যাত প্রবাহিনী-গোরাই, মাঝখানে গাছপালা, লোকালয়ে সুন্দর শান্তিময় পরিবেশ। বসবাসের জন্য যে কুটিবাড়ি ছিল সেখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ অল্পই থাকতেন। কাছারির কাজ সেরে তিনি চলে যেতেন যেখানে ঘাটে বাঁশা থাকত তাঁর বজরা। নাম 'পদা'। একা যখন থাকতেন তখন নদীর উপর এই নোটেই ছিল তাঁর নিজের বাড়ি। নোটে করে নদী পথে যেতেন বিস্তীর্ণ জমিদারীর বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলে সাজাদপুর, পতিসর, কালিগ্রামে। তবে বেশির ভাগ সময় কাটিত শিলাইদহে।

বালক বয়সে এখানে একবার এসেছিলেন নতুনদারের সঙ্গে। হিমালয় দেখে আসার পর, নদী-যাতুক বাংলা দেশের সঙ্গে সেই তাঁর প্রথম পরিচয়। এবারকার আসা অন্যরকম। সদর পৌঁচের সেই অপূর্ণ দর্শনের ফলে তাঁর চোখ খুলেছে, মৃত্যুশোকের আঘাতে তাঁর অন্তর গভীর হয়েচে, সন্তানের পিতা হয়ে তিনি সংসারের দায়িত্ব বুঝতে শিখেছেন। এতকাল তাঁর দিন কেটেছে সাহিত্য, সংগীত অভিনয় নিয়ে। অধিকাংশ সময় থেকেছেন কলকাতা শহরে। বিষয় কর্মের ভার নিয়ে এই যে তিনি একেলায়ে গ্রাম দেশে চলে এলেন—এখানে তাঁর জীবনের একটি মহান অধ্যায়ের সূচনা হল।

অল্পে অল্পে গ্রামীণ বাংলার সঙ্গে সরলচিত্ত চাষাভূমাদের সঙ্গে তাঁর মুখোমুখি পরিচয় ঘটতে লাগল। ডেলে বেলায় হিন্দু মেলা, মতীবনী সভা প্রতি নিজে ডেলে মানুষ করেছেন, সদেশ নিয়ে মাতামাতি করেছেন। এবার প্রত্যক্ষ করলেন সত্যকার স্বদেশকে। দেখতে পেলেন 'আমাদের এই মান্নির না, আমাদের এই আপন পৃথিবী।' এর সোনার শয্যা ক্ষেত্র, প্রেমশালিনী নদী গুলির ধারে, স্তম্ভদুঃখময় ভালোবাসার লোকালয়ের মধ্যে বঙ্গ-জমনী কোল পেতে রেখেছেন তাঁর সন্তানদের জন্য। দেখলেন গ্রামের মানুষকে; সত্যিকার মান্নির মানুষ যারা।

সাজাদপুরে থাকতে, তাঁর খাশ খামসামা একদিন সকাল বেলা দেরি করে এল। তরুণ জমিদারবাবু বিরক্ত, অপ্রসন্ন। সামনে এসে মোমিন মিশ্র তাঁর নিত্য নিয়মিত সেলামটি করে ধরা গলায় বলল:

—'কাল রাতে আমার আঁচবছরের মেয়েটি চলে গেল। তার গোরের উপর মান্নি চাপিয়ে এই এলাম।' এই বলে বাঁড়ন হাতে রোজকার মতো বাঁড় পৌঁচি বোওয়া মোড়ায় লেগে গেল।

আর একদিনের ঘটনা। এক বুড়ো চাষী এসে বলল:

—'সে বছর ভালো ধান হয়নি বলে চুঁচড়ায় তোমার বুড়ো বাপের কাছে এনছাপু নিতে গিয়েছিলাম। তা সে বলল, আমি তোদের কিছু ছেড়ে দিচ্ছি, তোরাও আমাকে কিছু খেতে দিস।

তাঁর কাছে দরবার করতে গিয়েছিলাম বলে সেই মনোবাদের এখানকার আমিন আমাকে ফেরেবি মোকদ্দমায় ফেলে, তিনমাস জেল পাঠাল। তোমার মান্নিকে সেলাম করে তাই তিনি এলাকায় চলে গিয়েছিলাম। ওখানকার জমিদার তোমার কতক জমি চুরি করে ভোগ করছিল। সে কথা এখানকার সেরেস্তায় জানিয়ে যাই। সেই রাতে জমিদার আমার ধান স্তম্ভ জমি কেড়ে নিল। তা' বলে বার মান্নিতে আমি বুড়ো হলান, তার ছিতের কথা তাঁকে বলতে পারব না? এই বলে বুড়ো মিশ্র চোখ থেকে এক ফোঁটা জল মুছে ফেলল।

আলো একটি ঘটনা এখানে নম্নে আসে। পান্নি চেপে চলেছেন জমিদারীতে। মাঠ থেকে ছুটিতে ছুটিতে এসে জমিদারের পান্নি খানালে এক প্রবীন চাষী কাপড়ের খুঁটি খুলে দাখিল করল মজরানা। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিতে চান নি। স্বনবে কেন বন্ধ? মহাজ সরলতার উজ্জ্বল।

—'আমরা না দিলে তোরা পান্নি কী?'

এই সব সরলপ্রাণ প্রজাদের সঙ্গে তাঁর পরিচয় গভীর হয়ে লাগল। জমিদারের কাছেই ভিতর দিয়ে এইসব নিঃসহায়, নিরুপায়, নিতান্ত নিভরপর চাষাভূমাদের তিনি চিনতে শিখলেন। বুঝতে পারলেন এরা তাঁর আপনার লোক, তাঁর দেশ জোড়া বৃহৎ পরিবারের লোক। এদের মুখে ভাষা দিতে না পারলে, এদের বুকে আশা জাগিয়ে তুলতে না পারলে, দেশের মঙ্গল নেই। যে দেশের শতকরা আশিজন গ্রামে বসবাস করে, সেখানে গ্রাম যদি পিড়িরে থাকে তাহলে দেশ কি কখনো এগিয়ে যেতে পারে? তিনি এ কথাও বুঝতে পারলেন যতদিন এই দেশজোড়া নাভালকের দল মানুষের মত নিজের নিজের পায়ে না দাঁড়াতে পারছে, ততদিন কেউ এদের রক্ষা করতে পারবে না রাজাও না—জমিদারও না—এমন কি, ষ্ট্রন-আল্লাও নয়। এরা পরের মুখের দিকে তাকিয়ে থাকে, শক্তিমানে দয়া দাক্ষিণ্যের ভরসা রাখে, আর স্তম্ভ দুঃখে কথায় কথায় অদৃষ্ট নর্যাবের দোহাই দেয়। এরা বুঝতে পারে না দেশের-শক্তি, জাতির-শক্তি এদেরই মধ্যে। ঘরে আশ্রয় লাগে, মড়কে গ্রাম উজাড় হয় এরা কপালচাপড়ে পোড়া কপালের দোষ দেয়, নয় তো বনীর দরজায় হাত পাতে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ নানাভাবে চেষ্টা করতে লাগলেন পল্লীর উন্নতির জন্য। ভিক্ষা দিয়ে মানুষকে জাগান যায় না,—তাই তিনি প্রজাদের ডেকে বললেন:—'তোমাদের ভালো একমাত্র তোমরা নিজেরাই করতে পার। যেকাজ একা করতে পারবে না। যেকাজ আর পাঁচজনর উপকারে লাগবে, যেকাজ তোমরা একত্রে মিলেমিশে করো। দশে মিলে করি কাজ, আরি জিতি নাহি লাজ।'

বাঁহের থেকে সাদুপদেশে দেওয়া সহজ, ভিতর থেকে কাজের মধ্য দিয়ে যোগ দানিয়ে তোলা কত যে কদিন রবীন্দ্রনাথ এবার ছাড়ে ছাড়ে বুঝতে পারলেন। কেবল দেশ বা দেশের লোককে ভালো বাসলেই দেশের কাজ করা যায় না। সেটা করতে গেলেও শিক্ষার দরকার সাধনার দরকার।

শ্রীানিকেতনের ভূমিকা :

শিলাইদহে থাকতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিশ্চিত বুঝেছিলেন শহরে লোকের অনুগ্রহের ভাণ নিয়ে গ্রামের কাজ করতে যাওয়া বিড়ম্বনা মাত্র। গ্রামে একদিন শ্রী ছিল, স্বাস্থ্য ছিল, সম্পদ ছিল। মড়াই ভরা থান ছিল, গোয়াল ভরা গোরু ছিল, পুকুর ভরা মাছ ছিল। কামার কুমার প্রতি চুতোরা ছিল। পাঠশালা, মৌল চতুষ্পাঠিতে বিদ্যা অঙ্কুরের বাবস্থা ছিল। বারো মাসে তেরো পার্শ্ব এবং কাঁঠন কথকতা যাত্রাগানের মধ্য দিয়ে গ্রামের মানুষ নিজেদের নিজেদের মধ্যে আনন্দ বিধান করতে পারতো। এই যে অসংস্পৃশ্য গ্রাম সমাজের ভাঙনের মূলে শহর আশ্রিত আধুনিক সমাজ ব্যবস্থা ও অর্থনীতি।

পলাশীর যুদ্ধে (১৭৫৭) জয়ী হয়ে ইংরেজ কায়দা হয়ে বসে ছিল কলকাতায়। মুষ্টিমেয় বিদেশী তাদের পক্ষে শহর পতন করে রাখা শাসন করাই সম্ভব। যা ছিল জেলে জেলার বহি, সেখানে গড়ে উঠল আদম শহর কলকাতা। কলকাতার দেখাদেখি বাংলায় জেলায় জেলায় চোঁচি বড়ো সব শহর গড়ে উঠল। বাকবাক লাঠাঘাট, তকতকে বাড়ী, স্কুল কলেজ হাসপাতাল ও দোকান পশারের সব জমজমাট। তা ছাড়া দণ্ডমুহুর কত যতন সায়েব স্বরা শহরেই থাকেন। দেশের রাজা ও জমিদার বাঁরা একদিন গ্রামের মধ্যে থেকে প্রজাপালন করে এসেছেন, পাড়াগায়ে আর তাদের মন বেঁকে না। গুরু হল শহর মুখী অভিযান। গ্রামে গড়ে উঠল কেবল চাষাভূমির দল। মন্দিরের ফাঁদ থেকে বেরল গ্রন্থাগার, চর্চামণ্ডপে জমল বুলো, পানায় ভরল পুকুর, আর মালেরিয়ায় ডেয়ে গেল সমস্ত দেশ। সমাজের মাথা ছিলেন, বাঁরা, তাঁরা চলে গেলেন শহরে। তাঁদের সমস্ত সমৃদ্ধি গ্রামকে 'গ্রাম' অপবাদ দিয়ে অবজ্ঞায় দূরে রাখল। দীর্ঘ দশবছর পল্লী অঞ্চলে থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বুঝেছিলেন :

যারে ভূমি মিচে ফেল সে তোমারে নাঁদিবে যে নিচে
পশ্চাতে রেখেছ যারে সে তোমারে পশ্চাতে বিনিচ্ছে।

তিনি বুঝেছিলেন গ্রামকে যারা অনুগ্রহের দৃষ্টিতে দেখে তারাই হল সত্যিকার করুণার পাত্র। এসব তথাকথিত ভ্রমলোকের অধিকার নেই পল্লী সেবার যোগ্যতাও নেই। যারা গ্রামকে পছন্দ করেছে, দুর্বল করেছে, তারা যদি আজ ত্রানকর্তা সেজে আসে, গ্রাম তাদের গ্রহণ করবে না। 'ঐচ্ছা দেয়'—ঐচ্ছা সহকারে দিতে হয়। আনাড়ির অধুরের মত এলোপাতাড়ি কাজ অকাজের বাড়া।

বঙ্গভেদের সারাছে যখন দেশময় উত্তেজনা, সেই সময় (১৯০৪) কলিকাতায় একটি জনসভায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ 'স্বদেশী সমাজ' বিষয়ে তাঁর প্রবন্ধ পাঠ করলেন। দেশের প্রকৃত সমস্যা কি, এবং তাঁর সমাধান কোথায়, কী পদ্ধতিতে দেশের প্রাণশক্তি গ্রামে গ্রামে জাগিয়ে তুলতে হবে, তা তিনি পরিষ্কার করে বললেন।

কিন্তু সেকালের রাজনীতিক নেতারা হেসে উড়িয়ে দিলেন তাঁর কথা। তাঁরা তখন ইংরেজিতে গলাবাজি করে ইংরেজ বিতাড়নের নেশায় মত্ত। দেশের মন পাওয়া গেল না দেশের কাজে—এখন তাই তিনি আপন চেঁচাতেই কতটুকু কী করতে পারেন, তার সমানে লাগলেন।

যাতে কৃষিনিষ্ঠ গ্রাম দেশের সত্যিকারের উন্নতি করতে পারে সেই উদ্দেশ্যে তাঁর আশ্রম বিদ্যালয়ের প্রথম যে দুটি ছাত্র এন্থ্রোপাশ করে বেরলেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও সন্তোষচন্দ্র, তাঁদের দু'জনেই পাঠিয়ে দিলেন ১৯০৬ অব্দে আমেরিকার ইলিনয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে কৃষিবিজ্ঞান অধ্যয়ন করতে। ১৯০৭-৮ পর্বে দেখা যায় একদিকে তিনি বিদ্যালয়ের কাজ দেখছেন শান্তিনিকেতনে, অন্যদিকে শিলাইদহ, পতিসর অঞ্চলে পল্লী উন্নয়নের পরীক্ষার হাত লাগিয়েছেন। একাজে তাঁর প্রধান সহায় হয়েছেন কালীমোহন ঘোষ প্রমুখ কয়েকটি পূর্ববঙ্গের যুবক।

১৯০৮ ফেব্রুয়ারী মাসে পারমা প্রাদেশিক সঞ্চালনের সভাপতিত্ব করতে গিয়ে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ আবার একবার দেশের আকর্ষণ করতে চাইলেন গ্রামের দিকে। গ্রামে সমাজনীতির প্রচলন, মিত্রশ্রমিক যন্ত্রের ব্যবহার, কৃষির শিল্পের প্রবর্তন, সংঘবদ্ধ ভাবে শিক্ষা ও স্বাস্থ্যের উন্নতি সাধন এই সব মান্য বিষয়ে স্পষ্ট নির্দেশ দিলেন। তাঁর এই অভিজ্ঞতালব্ধ জ্ঞানের কথা বোঝাবার মত দু'দৃষ্টি দেশের তখন ছিল না।

১৯০৬ থেকে ১৯০৯ অবধি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও সন্তোষচন্দ্র আমেরিকায় কৃষিবিদ্যা শিক্ষা করে দেশে ফিরে এলেন। সন্তোষচন্দ্র গোড়া এসে যোগ দিলেন বিদ্যালয়ের কাজে। ছাত্রদের মধ্যে বাগান করা, গোপালন, ছাতের কাজ, খেলাধুলা এই সবতেই প্রবর্তনা দিতে সন্তোষচন্দ্র ছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রধান সহায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন জমিদারীর কাজে তদারক করার ফাঁকে ফাঁকে শিলাইদহ পতিসর অঞ্চলে উন্নত ধরনের কৃষি পদ্ধতি ও মিত্রশ্রমিক যন্ত্রপাতি চালু করার চেষ্টা করতে লাগলেন। গ্রামের হিতৈষী সভার কাজ, কৃষি ঋণদানের ব্যাঙ্ক, গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েত দ্বারা নিষাদ নিষ্পত্তি, স্কুল স্থাপন ইত্যাদি নানা গঠনমূলক কাজে—তখন গ্রামবাগী সোৎসাহে যোগ দিয়েছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখন ভাবতে লাগলেন কী উপায়ে শান্তিনিকেতন বিদ্যালয়ের সঙ্গে গ্রাম সেবার কাজ একটি কল্যাণ সূত্রে করা যায়। বোধ করি এই একটি সম্ভাবনার কথা তাঁর মনে ছিল বলে ১৯১২-১৩ অব্দে তিনি যখন শিলাতে, সেই সময় রায়পুরের কর্ণেল নরেন্দ্র প্রসাদ সিংহের কাছ থেকে গুরুত্ব কৃষি ও তৎসংলগ্ন বিস্তীর্ণ জমি কিনে রাখেন।

শ্রীানিকেতন প্রতিষ্ঠা :

বিশ্বভারতী সূচনার (১৯১৮) পর থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ দেশের শিক্ষার সঙ্গে দেশের সর্বাঙ্গীন জীবন ধারার যোগ সাধনার কথা একাধিক প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন। আদেয়ারে (দক্ষিণ ভারত) বজ্রতা প্রসঙ্গে তিনি বলেছিলেন :

'ভারতবর্ষে যদি সত্য বিদ্যালয় স্থাপিত হয় তবে গোড়া হইতেই সে বিদ্যালয় তাহার অর্থশাস্ত্র, তাহার কৃষিতত্ত্ব, তাহার স্বাস্থ্য বিদ্যা, তাহার সমস্ত ব্যবহারিক বিজ্ঞানকে আপন প্রতিষ্ঠা স্থলের চতুর্দিকবর্তী পল্লীর মধ্যে প্রয়োগ করিয়া দেশের জীবন যাত্রার কেন্দ্রস্থান অধিকার করিবে। এই বিদ্যালয় উৎকৃষ্ট

আদর্শে চাষ করিবে, গো-পালন করিবে, কাপড় বুনিবে এবং নিজের আর্থিক সম্বল লাভের জন্য সমবায় প্রণালী অবলম্বন করিয়া ছাত্র শিক্ষক ও চারিদিকের অধিবাসীদের সঙ্গে ভূমিকার যোগে ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে যুক্ত হইবে।

এই আদর্শ অবলম্বনে আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে বিশ্বভারতী প্রতিষ্ঠার (২৩শে ডিসেম্বর ১৯২১) অল্পদিন পরেই ৬ই ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯২২ তারিখে স্কুল কঠিতে পল্লীসংগঠন সংস্থা স্থাপিত হয়। এই কেন্দ্রের কবি নাম দেন শ্রীনিকেতন, 'শ্রী' অর্থে সৌন্দর্য, আনন্দ, প্রশংসা। শ্রীহীন পল্লী অন্ধনের শ্রী ফিরিয়ে আনবে এই আশায় শ্রীনিকেতনের প্রতিষ্ঠা।

শ্রীনিকেতনের প্রথম অধ্যক্ষ হয়ে এলেন লেনার্ড এলমহর্দি, জটনক আদর্শবাদী কর্মতৎপর ইংরেজ যুবা। তাঁর এই কাজে উৎসাহী সহযোগীরূপে যাদের তিনি পেয়েছিলেন তাঁদের মধ্যে অগ্রগণ্য ছিলেন কালীমোহন ঘোষ, ফারিসিয়ার নামে একজন আমেরিকান ডাক্তার, সন্তোষ চন্দ্র মজুমদার, কাগাফারা নামে জাপানের একজন স্বদেশ দারুণশিল্পী ও গৌর গোপাল ঘোষ।

স্কুল ও তার আশেপাশে গ্রামে ছাতে কলমে কাজ করার পর এলমহর্দি তার প্রত্যক্ষ অভিজ্ঞতার কথা কবির কাছে ব্যক্ত করলেন। অতঃপর উভয়ে মিলে শ্রীনিকেতনের আদর্শ ও উদ্দেশ্য বিবৃত করে যা বললেন তার তাৎপর্য দাঁড়ায় এইরকম :

শ্রদ্ধা দেয়ম্। মানুষ হিসাবে গ্রামবাসী শ্রদ্ধার বোণা। শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে গ্রামের সামগ্রিক জীবনকে চিত্রিত হবে, জনহৃদে হবে, বুঝতে হবে। গ্রামের সঙ্গে শ্রদ্ধার সম্বন্ধ গড়ে উঠলে গ্রাম-সেবার অধিকার জন্মায়। গ্রামের যেসব সমস্যা, যেগুলিকে বিচ্ছিন্ন ও বিশ্লিষ্ট করে দেখলে চলবে না। সামগ্রিকভাবে দেখতে হবে। গ্রামের শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, কৃষি, শিল্পে সমাজ সংস্কৃতি এ সমস্তই গ্রাম জীবনের পরস্পর আপেক্ষিক ভিন্ন ভিন্ন দিক। এসব সমস্যার কীভাবে সমাধান হয় সে বিষয়ে চিন্তা করতে হবে। কেবল উচ্ছ্রাসের দ্বারা কাষসিদ্ধি হবে না। কাজের দ্বারা আছে,

উপায় আছে রীতিপদ্ধতি আছে যা শিক্ষার সাহায্যে বা অভিজ্ঞতার দ্বারা আরও করতে হয়। সমস্যার সন্তোষজনক সমাধান যদি মেলে তবে তা গ্রামের লোকের কাছে পেশ করতে হবে। ব্যক্তি-গত ও সমাজগতভাবে গ্রাম যদি তা সচ্ছন্দচিত্তে গ্রহণ করে, তাহলে গ্রামসেবা সাধক। গ্রাম সেবার প্রধান লক্ষ্য হবে আত্মশক্তি ও সমবায় শক্তির ভিত্তিতে, গ্রামের লোকের চেতনাই গ্রামের শ্রী, সম্পদ ও আনন্দ ফিরিয়ে আনা।

শ্রীনিকেতনে বিভিন্ন সময়ে কত বিষয় নিয়ে যে পরীক্ষা নিরীক্ষা হয়ে গেছে তার বিশদ বিবরণ দিতে গেলে একটা আলাদা বই হয়ে যায়। বোধকরি এইটুকু বললেই যথেষ্ট বলা হবে যে শ্রীমুক্তির নেতৃত্বে কংগ্রেস যে গ্রাম উন্নয়নের পরিকল্পনা গ্রহণ করেন, এবং সংস্কৃতি ভারতের জাতীয় সরকার যে সমাজ কল্যাণ সংস্থা দেশময় ছড়িয়ে দিয়েছেন তাদের রীতিমার্গিত পদ্ধতি অনেক অংশে শ্রীনিকেতন আদর্শেই অনুপ্রাণিত ও পতিষ্ঠিত।

স্বাধীনতার পরে যে সংস্কৃতি টিলা না যে তিনি পল্লী সংগঠনের কাজ আরো ব্যাপকভাবে করতে পারেন। শ্রীনিকেতনের কাছে যে অর্থব্যয় হতো তার অনেকখানি একাদিক্রমে প্রায় পঁচিশ বছর ধরে এলমহর্দিই জুগিয়েছিলেন। আকারে বৃহৎ না হলেও সত্যি আদর্শের মর্বাদা ক্ষুদ্র হয় না।

তার মৃত্যুর দু'বছর আগে তাই স্বাধীনতার পরে বলতে শুনি : 'আমি একলা সমস্ত ভার তব্বের দায় নিতে পারব না। আমি কেবল জয় করব একটি বা দুটি ছোটগ্রাম। এদের মনকে পেতে হবে, এদের সঙ্গে একত্র কাজ করার শক্তি সঞ্চয় করতে হবে।.....আমি যদি কেবল দুই তিনটি গ্রামকে মুক্তি দিতে পারি অজ্ঞতা অক্ষমতার বন্ধন থেকে, তবে সেখানেই সমগ্র ভারতের একটি ছোট আদর্শ তৈরি হবে।.....এই কথাানা গ্রামকে সম্পূর্ণ ভাবে মুক্ত করতে হবে, সবলে শিক্ষা পাবে, গ্রাম জুড়ে আনন্দের ছাওয়া বইবে, পান বাজনা কীর্তন পাঠ চলবে।.....আমি বলব এই কথাানা গ্রামই আমার ভাবতরঙ্গ।'

রবীন্দ্রনাথ

হিমালয়—

তুমি হিমে ঢাকা থাক, নদীরে কোলো না হিম।

আমার কলি-আড়িনা তুইয়া তোমার চপল মেয়ে

সবুজ করিয়া যুগে যুগে মোর ছোটে যে সবজি ক্ষেত

বাহিয়া চলুক, তুমি থাক, নাই থাক—

হিমাব তাহার আমি তো রাখিব নাফো ;

আমি ছাটিন না কিময়ে ভয়ে তোমার পরশ খুঁজি

যুগে যুগে আমি হান সমাপন করিব ও নদীজলে—

কোখায় উৎস, কোন সমুদ্রে পান,

ইতিহাস তার যে পারে রাখুক লিখে—

নদীজলে আমি হান করি তব্বা বাহিয়া চলি

যত ভালবাগি তত কাছে পাই পুনকে ফিরিয়া আসি।

—সঞ্জনীকান্ত দাস



আগনাকে তার হারিয়ে প্রকাশ

ডঃ হরপ্রসাদ মিত্র

‘বনবাণীতে’ নানা ফুল, নানা লতার কথা বলা হয়েছে। তার মধ্যে ‘মধুনগুরী’ নামে একটি কবিতা আছে। মধুনগুরী যে একটি বিদেশী লতা, সে-কথা রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেই বলে দিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু দেশের মন্দিরের বাইরে যে-দেবতা মূর্ত্ত্বরূপে আছে, তাই-ই বন্দনা ছানিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই লতানিকে এ দেশের আপন সামগ্রী করে নিয়েছিলেন। তাঁর নিজের কথায়—কাব্য-সম্বন্ধী কোনো মন্দিরের বন্দিদেবতা নন, তাঁর ব্যবহারে এই ফুলকে লাগান ঠিক করেছে, তাই মতুন করে নাম দিতে হল। রূপে রসে এর মধ্যে বিদেশী কিছুই নেই, এদেশের ছাওয়ায় মান্নিতে একটুও বিতর্ক দেখা যায় না, তাই দিশি মদন নামে একে আপন করে নিলেন। ‘চামেলিবিহান’ নামে ‘বনবাণীর’ আর একটি কবিতায় একটি ময়ূরকে সম্বোধন করে তিনি বলেছিলেন যে, ময়ূরটি তাঁকে মোটেই ভয় করেনি, তিনি যখন তাঁর নোচি খাতায় আপন মনে লিখে যেতেন, ময়ূর তখন তাঁর খুবই কাছে এসে, তাঁকে অনুমাত্র ও ভয় না করে, বেশ ঘোরাকেরা করতো। ময়ূর যে স্তম্ভের দূত এই কবিতাটিতে সে-কথাও বলা হয়েছিল। আর, সেই স্তম্ভের দূতের সঙ্গে নিজের আত্মীয়তা সম্বন্ধ করেই তিনি লিখেছিলেন—

আকাশেরে বাসি ভালো,
সকাল সন্ধ্যার কালো
আমার প্রাণের বর্ণে ভরি।
পরায় যেখানে তাই
তোমার গোরব-ঠাঁই
সেখায় আমরা ঠাঁই হয়।

পরিার্গন একবার কয়েক জোড়া সবুজ রঙের বিদেশী পাখি এনে শান্তিনিকেতন আশ্রমে ছেড়ে দিয়েছিলেন। তারা অনেক দিন সেখানে বাসা বেঁধে ছিল। তাদের সঙ্গে আমাদের এ-দেশী পাখির মর্মগত কোনো গরমিল যে ছিল না, সেই কথাটিই রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর এই ‘বনবাণী’ গ্রন্থের ‘পরদেশী’ কবিতায় বিশেষভাবে বলে গেছেন—

এনেছে কবে বিদেশী সখা
বিদেশী পাখি আমার বনে,
সকাল-গাঁবে কুণ্ড-মাঝে
উঠিছে ডাকি সহজ মনে।
অজানা এই সাগরপারে
হল না তার গানের স্রুতি।
সবুজ তার ডানার স্রুতি,
চপল তার নাচের গতি।

আমার দেশে যে-মেঘ এসে
নীপবনের মরমে মেঘে
বিদেশী পাখি গীতালি দিয়ে
মিতালি করে তাহার মনে।

বিশ্বের নানান প্রাণ, নানা রূপ, অশেষ ভাবস্তর এবং বিভিন্ন বারায় সঙ্গে এই ধরনের আত্মীয়তা-প্রকাশের নিদর্শন রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্যের সকল পর্বেরই চড়িয়ে আছে। তাঁর মৃত্যুর অল্প কাল আগে ১৯৪১-এর জানুয়ারি-ফেব্রুয়ারি মাসে জন্মদিন-সম্পর্কিত যে-কয়েকটি কবিতা তিনি লিখেছিলেন, সেগুলি তাঁর ‘জন্মদিনে’ কাব্যসংগ্রহে সংকলিত হয়েছে। তাঁরই প্রথম কবিতায় তাঁকে বলতে শোনা গেছে—

আজি এই জন্মদিনে
দূরত্বের অনুভব অন্তরে নিবিড় হয়ে এল।
যেমন সুদূর ঐ নক্ষত্রের পথ
নীহারিকা-জ্যোতির্বাষ্প-মাঝে
রহস্যে আবৃত,
আমার দূরত্ব আমি দেখিলাম তোমারি দূরত্ব—
অলক্ষ্য পথের যাত্রী, অজানা তাহার পরিণাম।
আজি এই জন্মদিনে
দূরের পথিক সেই তাহারি শুনিব পদক্ষেপ
নির্জন সমুদ্রতীর হতে।

এ কবিতা লেখা হয়েছিল ২১-এ ফেব্রুয়ারি, ১৯৪১, সকালে। সেই দিনেই,—সেই সেকালেই তাঁর ‘উদয়ন’ বাসগ্রহে বসে আর-একটি কবিতায় তিনি লিখেছিলেন—

যেখানেই বন্ধু পাই সেখানেই নবজন্ম ঘটে।
আনে সে প্রাণের অপূর্বতা।
বিদেশী ফুলের বনে অজানা কুসুম ফুটে থাকে—
বিদেশী তাহার নাম, বিদেশে তাহার জন্মভূমি,
আম্রার আনন্দক্ষেত্রে তার আত্মীয়তা
অবারিত পায় অভ্যর্থনা।

‘বনবাণী’, ‘জন্মদিনে’ ইত্যাদি বইগুলি অবিশ্যি রবীন্দ্রনাথের শেষ পর্বের কবিতার বই। তাঁর প্রথমদিকের অনেক লেখাতেই তাঁর গভীর মনের সেই একই আনন্দক্ষেত্রের কথা বলা হয়েছিল। ‘কড়ি ও কোমল’-এর ‘সত্য’ কবিতাটিতে তিনি বলেছিলেন—

যে গৃহে জানালা নাই সে তো কারাগার—
ভেঙে ফেলো, আগিবৎ স্বপ্নের আলো।
হায় হায়, কোথা সেই অখিলের ছোঁয়াতি।
চলিব সরল পথে অশঙ্কিত গতি।

‘সিন্ধুতীরে’ নামে সে-বইয়ের আর একটি কবিতায় তিনি বলেছিলেন—‘সবারে আগিতে বুক বুক বেড়ে যায়।’ ‘আত্ম অপমান’ নামে আর একটি কবিতায় তিনি বলেছিলেন—

মোড়ো তবে অশ্রুজল, চাও হাসিমুখে
বিচিত্র এ জগতের সকলের পানে।
মানে আর অপমানে স্তখে আর দুখে
নিখিলেরে ডেকে লও প্রসন্ন পরানে।

এই সর্বব্যাপী আত্মীয়তাবোধ এবং জীবনাসক্তিই ‘কড়ি ও কোমল’ প্রথম কবিতাটির সর্বত্র পরিব্যাপ্ত। সেই ‘প্রাণ’ কবিতাতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছিলেন—

বসিতে চাহি না আমি সুন্দর ভুবনে,
মানবের মারো আমি বাঁচবারে চাই।
এই সূর্যকরে এই পৃথিবীত কাননে
জীবন্ত হৃদয়-মারো যদি স্থান পাই।
বরাহ প্রাণের খেলা চিরতরঙ্গিত
বিরহ মিলন কত হাসি-অশ্রু-ময়—
মানবের স্তখে দুখে পাখিরা সংগীত
যদি গো রচিতে পারি অমর-খালয়।

‘কড়ি ও কোমল’, জীবনাসক্তির কথা অনেক লেখাতেই চড়িয়ে আছে। সেইসঙ্গে ‘কুদ্র অহং’ বা যাকে তিনি ‘টোটি আমি’ বলেছেন, সেই ‘আমি’-র অহংকার সম্বন্ধে মতক থাকবার কথাও বলা হয়েছে। ‘কড়ি ও কোমল’ ‘কুদ্র আমি’ কবিতাটি এদিক থেকে সমরণীয়। এই লেখাটির শেষ দুই চত্রে লিখে-
ছিলেন—

কুদ্র আমি করিতেছে বড়ো অহংকার—
ভাঙে নাথ, ভাঙে নাথ, অভিমান ভার।

এই মনোভঙ্গি অর্জনের পরে ‘মানসী’-তে নিজের সাহিত্যিক জীবন সম্বন্ধে তিনি বলতে পেরেছিলেন—

দাঁড়ায়ে বিশাল ধরণীর তলে
ঘুচে গেল ভয় লাজ;
বুঝিতে পারিনি এ জগৎ-মারো
আনারো রয়েছে কাজ।

এ ঘটনা ১৮৮৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের জ্যৈষ্ঠশেষের ‘পরিভ্রাজ্য’ কবিতাটিতে প্রতিফলিত। সেই জ্যৈষ্ঠশেষেই ‘কবির প্রতি নিবেদন’ নামে ‘মানসী’-র আর একটি কবিতা লেখা হয়েছিল।

তাতেও ক্রান্তিহীন, চিরপ্রবহমান জীবন-স্রোতের সঙ্গে কবি-মানসের সম্পর্কের কথা ভাবা হয়েছিল। এই ‘মানসী’ সম্বন্ধেই প্রথম চৌধুরীকে লেখা ১৮৯৬ সালের ২৯ জানুয়ারি তারিখের এই চিঠিতে তিনি লিখেছিলেন—এখন এক-একবার মনে হয় আমার মধ্যে দুটো—বিপরীত শক্তির দ্বন্দ্ব চলছে। একটা আমাকে সর্বদা বিশ্রাম এবং পরিসমাপ্তির দিকে আশ্রয় করছে, আর একটা আমাকে কিছুতে বিশ্রাম করতে দিচ্ছে না। আমার ভারতবর্ষীয় শাস্ত্র প্রকৃতিকে যুরোপের চাকলা সর্বদা আঘাত করছে—সেইজন্য একদিকে বেদনা, আর একদিকে বৈরাগ্য। একদিকে কবিতা, আর একদিকে ফিলজাকি। একদিকে দেশের প্রতি ভালোবাসা, আর একদিকে দেশ-হিতৈষিতার প্রতি উপহাস। একদিকে কর্মের প্রতি আগ্রহ, আর একদিকে চিন্তার প্রতি আকর্ষণ।

কিন্তু, ‘মানসী’ সম্বন্ধে আরো একটি কথা এখানেই সমরণীয়। মানুষ যাকে ‘ভালোবাসা’ বলে,—আমাদের সেই চিন্তাভাব্য, চিরবাস্তব এবং তথাকথিত ভালোবাসা সম্বন্ধে প্রথম চৌধুরীর কাছে লেখা এক চিঠিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ জানিয়েছিলেন—ভালো করে দেখতে গেলে, মানসীর ভালোবাসার অংশটুকুই কাব্যকথা—বড়ো রকমের সুন্দর রকমের খেলা মাত্র—ওর আসল গতি কথাতুকু হচ্ছে এই যে, মানুষ কি চায় তা কিছু জানে না—একবার জল চায় কি আবখানা বেল চায় জিজ্ঞাসা করলে বলতে পারে না; আমি এমন অবস্থায় মনের সঙ্গে আপসে বোঝাপড়া করে কল্পনার কল্পনামের মায়াফল পাড়বার চেষ্টা করছি। এই চিঠিরই পরের দিকে তিনি বলেছিলেন—‘মানুষের মনে ঈশ্বরের মতো অগীম আকাঙ্ক্ষা আছে, কিন্তু ঈশ্বরের মতো অগীম ক্ষমতা নেই—কেউ বা বলছে আছে, বলে বহির্জগতে চেষ্টা করে বেড়াচ্ছে—কেউ বা জানে নেই, তাই আকাঙ্ক্ষার রাজ্যে বসেই অর্ধনিরাশ্রাস ভাবে কল্পনাপুঞ্জী গড়িয়ে তাকে পূজো করছে। একেই বল ভালোবাসা? আমার ভালোবাসার লোক কই? আমি ভালো-বাসি অনেককে—কিন্তু মানসীতে যাকে খাড়া করেছি সে মানসেই আছে, যে আঁটিরই হাতে রচিত ঈশ্বরের প্রথম অসম্পূর্ণ প্রতিমা ক্রমে সম্পূর্ণ হবে কি?’

এই অহং-নিরাশ্রাস জীবনাসক্তির জোরেই ‘অধিকার’-তে পৌঁছে তিনি বলতে পেরেছিলেন—

কেউবা থাকে ঘরের কোণে দাঁড়ে,
জগৎ-মারো কেউ-বা হাঁকায় রথ,
কেউ-বা মরে একলা ঘরের শোকে,
জনারণ্যে কেউ-বা হারায় পথ—
সবাই মোরে করেন ডাকাডাকি,
কখন শুনি পরকালের ডাক।
সবার আমি সমান-বয়সী যে
চুলে আমার যত বরফ পাক।

‘অধিকার’ এই আবেগই ‘বনবাণীর’ ‘মুক্তিতরঙ্গ’, ‘উদ্বোধন’ প্রভৃতি ‘নিরাজ-ঋতুরঙ্গশালা’ অধ্যায়ের গানে গানে ‘ধ্বনিত’ হয়েছিল।

শান্তিনিকেতনের গোঁসাইজী

শ্রীশ্রীশ্রীশ্রী শ্রীশ্রীশ্রী



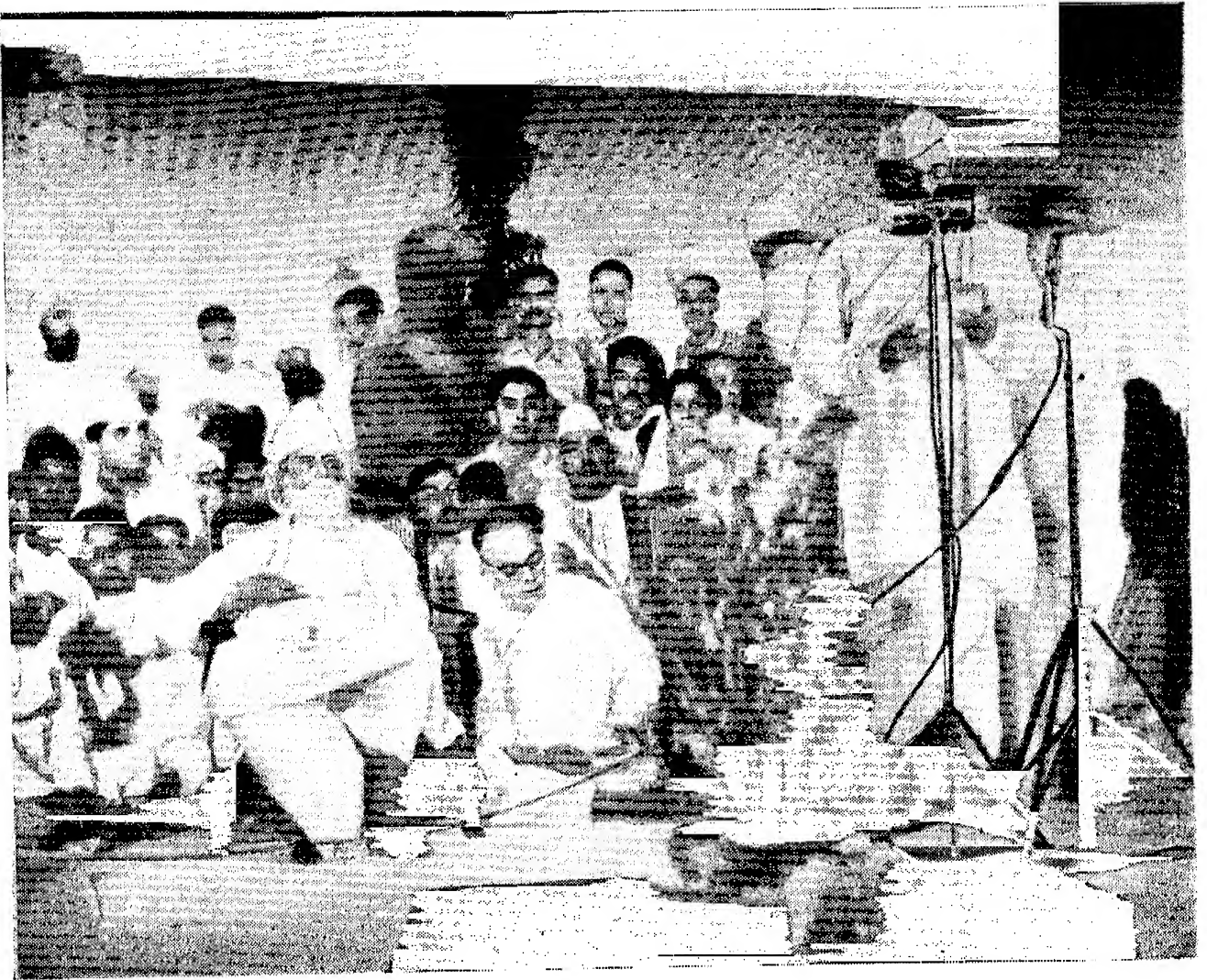
বদ্যাজ্ঞান যে যদ্ব্যপাৎ অধ্যাপক এবং শিক্ষকদ্বিগের
সংযোগিতায় তাঁহার শিক্ষাদর্শকে শান্তিনিকেতনে রূপ দিবার
সাধনা করিয়াছিলেন শ্রীযুক্ত নিতাই বিনোদ গোস্বামী তাঁহাদের
মধ্যে বিশেষ একজন। গোস্বামী মহাশয় শান্তিনিকেতনে
সকলের কাছে, গোঁসাইজী নামে পরিচিত। আজ পাঁচ মাসেরও
অধিককাল গোঁসাইজী পাড়িত হইয়া শান্তিনিকেতন হাসপাতালে
শয্যাশায়ী হইয়া আছেন। তাঁহাকে দেখিবার জন্য বিশৃঙ্খলতার
উপাচার্য, অনেক শিক্ষক, অধ্যাপক, ছাত্র-ছাত্রী এবং আরও
অনেকে হাসপাতালে আসেন। কেন এত লোক, এত প্রাণমান্য
ব্যক্তির তাঁহাকে হাসপাতালে দেখিতে আসেন? গোঁসাই-
জীর এত নাম, এত সমাদর কেন? এই প্রশ্ন জটিলক বহিরাগত
ভক্তলোক করিয়াছিলেন আজ প্রায় ২৩ মাস আগে। যেমন
অনেক লোক শান্তিনিকেতন দেখিতে আসেন ভক্তলোকটিও
তেনমতাদেই একদিনের জন্য আসিয়াছিলেন এবং হাসপাতালের
পাশ দিয়া, শান্তিনিকেতন অতিথি নিবাসের দিকে যাওয়ার
সময়—হাসপাতাল উপাচার্য মহাশয়কে দেখিতে পাইয়া কোঁতুল
বশত ভাবিতে চাহেন কেন উপাচার্য মহাশয় হাসপাতালে
আসিয়াছেন। তখন তিনি ভাবিতে পারেন যে, গোঁসাইজীকে
দেখিবার জন্য উপাচার্য মহাশয় হাসপাতালে আসিয়াছেন।
তারপরই তাঁহাকে সংক্ষেপে বলা হয় গোঁসাইজী পরিচয়।
সেই দিনই মনে হইল আমাদের প্রিয়গোঁসাইজীর পরিচয় সংক্ষেপে,
বিশৃঙ্খলতার ভক্তবৃন্দের কাছে দিলে অনেকের খুসী হইবেন।

গোঁসাইজীর আদিনিবাস শান্তিপুর। শান্তিপুরেই ১৩০০
সালের ২৪শে আশ্বিন মহালয়ার দিন তাঁর জন্ম হয়। শিশু-
কালেই (ছয়-সাত বৎসর তাঁর বয়স)) তাঁহার পিতা রামিকা নাথ
গোস্বামী মহাশয় তাঁহাকে বৃন্দাবনে লইয়া যান। বৃন্দাবনে
তান্না বাস বৎসর গোঁসাইজী ছিলেন এবং বৃন্দাবনের একটি পাঠ-
শালায় সংস্কৃত-পাঠ সমাধা করিয়া আয়মানিক হের বৎসর বয়সে
কাশীতে যান। কাশী কুইন্স কলেজ হইতে সংস্কৃততে মাটি কুলে-
শান পরীক্ষা পাশ করেন। এই পরীক্ষা পাশ করা ছাড়াও আরো
কয়েকটি উচ্চমানের পরীক্ষার বিষয় পাঠ গ্রহণ করেন। কাশীতে
এই পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ হইবার কিছুদিন পরেই চলিয়া আসিলেন
কলিকাতায় এবং ভর্তি হইলেন বিদ্যাবানন্দ সংস্কৃত কলেজে।
এই বিদ্যালয় হইতেও যোগ্যতার সহিত মাটি ও পরীক্ষার পাশ
করিয়া কলিকাতা সংস্কৃত কলেজে উচ্চতর শিক্ষার জন্য ভর্তি
হইলেন। এই সময় গোঁসাইজী তাঁহার পিতার শিষ্য রায় বাহাদুর
বনমালী রায় মহাশয়ের ভবানীপুরের বাড়ীতে থাকিতেন ও
ভবানীপুর হইতে ক্রমে সংস্কৃত কলেজে আসা যাওয়া করিতেন।
বনমালীবাবুর ভবিদ্যারী ছিল পাবনা জিলায়। সেই জমিদারীর

বাংসনিক আর তখন ছিল পাচলক্ষ টাকা মতন। সংস্কৃত কলেজে
পড়িবার জন্য গোঁসাইজীকে কোনো ফিস দিতে হইত না,
কোনো ছাত্রকেই ফিস দিতে হইত না। এই কলেজে যাঁহার
ছাত্রদের পড়াইতেন তাঁহার সকলেই সংযোগ্য, শিক্ষক ছিলেন
এবং তাঁহাদের নাম,—বশ ও লেশ ছিল। বখা সময়ে এই সংস্কৃত
কলেজ হইতে গোঁসাইজী কৃতিত্বের সহিত সংস্কৃত কাব্যতীর্থ
এবং পালিতে যুগ বিশারদ উপাধি পরীক্ষায় পাশ করেন।

সংস্কৃত কলেজ হইতে উপযুক্ত পরীক্ষায় পাশ করার পর
গোঁসাইজী, চাকুরীর সন্ধান করিতেছিলেন। সেই সময়ে তিনি
ভাবিতে পারেন যে, বিশৃঙ্খলতার, একজন সংস্কৃত এবং পালি
ভাষা জানা রিসার্চ স্টুডেন্টের জন্য কাগজে বিজ্ঞাপন দেওয়া
হইয়াছে। গোঁসাইজী সেই বিজ্ঞাপন-সূত্রে শান্তিনিকেতনে
আসেন ইনটারভিউ দিতে,—১৯২১-২২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে। প্রথমে
পণ্ডিত মহামহোপাধ্যায় বিশ্বেশ্বর ভট্টাচার্য মহাশয় তখন ছিলেন
বিশৃঙ্খলতার বিদ্যা ভবনের অধ্যক্ষ। মহামহোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়কে
শান্তিনিকেতনে সকলে “শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়” বলিয়াই সম্বোধন করি-
তেন। শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের বিচারেই গোঁসাইজীই যোগ্য রিসার্চ
স্টুডেন্টরূপে নির্বাচিত হইলেন। শান্তিনিকেতনে আসিয়া
কিছু কাল পদ্যস্থ গোঁসাইজীকে, শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের সঙ্গেই
তাঁহার খোড়ো ঘরেই বাস করিতে হইয়াছিল। শাস্ত্রী
মহাশয়ের পুত্র শ্রীমান ব্রহ্মপুত্র, এবং কপিলেশ্বর শাস্ত্রী এবং
গোঁসাইজী এই বাড়ীতে এক সঙ্গেই থাকিতেন। শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়
বাবরই স্বপাকে খাইতেন। বাদবাকীরা ভোজন করিতেন
শান্তিনিকেতনের সাধারণ রন্ধনশালায়। কপিলেশ্বর শাস্ত্রীজী
“পণ্ডিতজী” নামেই অধিকাংশের দ্বারা সম্বোধিত হইতেন।
তিনি ছিলেন নৈখিলী ব্রাহ্মণ। রিসার্চ স্টুডেন্ট হিসাবে গোঁসাই-
জীকে মাসিক যে পনের টাকা বৃত্তি দেওয়া হইত, সেই পনের
টাকা কিং খোরাকী বাস বাবদ কাশিয়া লওয়া হইত।

গোঁসাইজীকে প্রত্যেক বছরে নতুন করিয়া এই একই বৃত্তি
দেওয়া হইত ছয় বৎসর পদ্যস্থ। শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের কাছেই
গোঁসাইজীকে রিসার্চের কাজ করিতে হইত, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে পালি
ভাষা এবং অভিধান সম্বন্ধে আরো জ্ঞান লাভের জন্য প্রথমে
সিঁহলী দার্শনিক পণ্ডিত মহাশ্বরি বর্মবীরের নিকট পাঠ
গ্রহণ করিতে হইত এই রিসার্চ ছাত্ররূপেই। শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ও
এই প্রথমে দার্শনিকের কাছে পালি ভাষা এবং পালি সাহিত্য
পড়িতেন। কিছু দিন শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের খোড়ো বাড়ীতে বাস
করিবার পর, পণ্ডিতজী এবং গোঁসাইজী, মহাশ্ববীরের সহিত,
একটি টালি দিয়ে ছাওয়া লম্বা বরণের ছাত্রাবাসে থাকিতেন।
এই ছাত্রাবাসটির পরে “আদিকুটার” নাম করণ হয় এবং কয়েক



ON FOUNDATION DAY OF MAHAJATI SADANA
WITH NETAJI

মহাজাতিসদনের ভিত্তিস্থাপন দিবসে
রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও স্বভাষচন্দ্র



মেজ বোঠান ॥ সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ॥ জ্যোতিরিন্দ্রনাথ ॥ নতুন বোঠান
Satyendranath and Jyotirindranath with their wives

বছর পরে উহার নতুন নাম দেওয়া হয় “প্রাককুনির”। এ ছাত্রাবাসটি আজও “প্রাককুনির” নামেই নিজের অস্তিত্বের পরিচয় দিতেছে, বর্তমান বিশ্বভারতীর লাইব্রেরীর পূর্বদিকে। শাস্ত্রী মহাশয় যে খোড়ো ঘরে বাস করিতেন—সে ঘর অনেকদিন হইল অদৃশ্য হইয়া গেছে; আছে তার চাতালের সমান্য কিছু কিছু চিহ্ন,—ঘাসের আর তুণের তলায়। গোসাঁইজীকে তারপর বিশ্বভারতী থেকেই পাঠানো হইল সিংহলে পালি-শাস্ত্রে এবং অভিধান-বিষয়ে আরেনবুংপাণ্ডি লাভের জন্য। সিংহলে যেখানে গোসাঁইজী ছিলেন সেটি সমগ্র এসিয়ার মধ্যে একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ এবং বিখ্যাত বৌদ্ধ মনেন্দ্র বা বৌদ্ধ বিহার। এই বিহার হইতে চয় মাস পড়াশোনা করিয়া ১৯৩০-৩১ সালে গোসাঁইজী ফিরিয়া আসিলেন শান্তিনিকেতনে।

গোসাঁইজীর বিদ্যানুরাগ, তাঁর অনাড়ম্বর সাদাসিধা জীবন যাত্রা এবং সংস্কৃত এবং বাঙলা ভাষায় তাঁর দখল দেখিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁকে আশ্রম বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রদের সংস্কৃত পড়বার ভার দিলেন। পণ্ডিত হরিচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়ের অধীনে তিনি শিক্ষকের কাজ করিয়া ছিলেন শিক্ষকরূপে তখন নিযুক্ত না হইয়াও।

৬ঃ শ্রীযুক্ত ধীরেন্দ্রমোহন সেন, এম. এ. পি. এইচ. ডি, যখন বিশ্বভারতী কলেজের প্রিন্সিপাল হইলেন তখন হইতেই প্রায় গোসাঁইজী পাকাপাকিভাবে আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষক পদে নিযুক্ত হইলেন এবং বেতন বার্ষিক হইল মাসিক ৪৫ টাকা। এই ৪৫ টাকা হইতে খোরাকী বাবদ কানি বাইত প্রতি মাসে ২৩ টাকা। এই রকম ভাবে ধীরে ধীরে গোসাঁইজীর নিজের কতিপয়ের জোরে বিশ্বভারতীতে সকলের একাযোগ্য আসন রচনা করিলেন। তাঁহার সহজ সরল জীবন এবং পালি ও সংস্কৃত ভাষায় তাঁহার বুৎপত্তির জন্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের স্নেহ এবং শ্রদ্ধা তাঁহার প্রতি উত্তরোত্তর বৃদ্ধি পাইল।

বহুদিন আদিবাসিনের বাস করিবার পর শান্তিনিকেতনের গুরুপল্লীতে গোসাঁইজী গপরিবারে বাস করিবার জন্য একটি খোড়ো মাটির বাড়ী পাইলেন। এই গুরুপল্লীর সকল শিক্ষকদের কোয়ার্টার খোড়ো বাড়ীই ছিল। এই সব ছোট ছোট খোড়ো বাড়িতেই বাস করিতেন—বিশ্বভারতীর নন্দলাল বসু, হরিচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, ক্ষিত্তিমোহন সেন, প্রভাতকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় প্রমুখ স্বনামধন্য শিক্ষকগণও।

গোসাঁইজী কেবল স্তব্ধাঙ্গ শিক্ষক একথা বলিলে তাঁহার সম্বন্ধে যথেষ্ট বলা হয় না। গোসাঁইজী অভিনয়ও করিতে পারিতেন। সেদিকেও তাঁহার পট্টন ছিল বেশ। “প্রহসন” “শারদোৎসব” “বিসর্জন” “অচলারতন”—“তাসের দেশ” “তপতী” নাটক অভিনয়ে গোসাঁইজী পাট নিতেন। একবার কলিকাতায় “তপতী” নাটক অভিনয়ে—“ত্রিবেদীর” পাট অভিনয় করিয়া বিশেষ খ্যাতি লাভ করিয়াছিলেন। তখনকার কলিকাতার কয়েকটি কাগজে গোসাঁইজীর অভিনয় প্রশংসা প্রকাশিত হইয়াছিল। একবার একটি নাটকের অভিনয়ে অংশ গ্রহণ করিবার জন্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ কলিকাতা হইতে গোসাঁইজীকে তার যোগে জানান যে কলিকাতায় গিয়া তাঁহাকে অভিনয়ে যোগ দিতে হইবে। শান্তিনিকেতনে গোসাঁইজী তখন জ্বরে পড়িয়াছেন। তবু জ্বর লইয়াই কলিকাতায় গেলেন এবং অভিনয়ও করিলেন। তাঁহার অভিনয় দেখিয়া, আচার্য্য অবনীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, গগনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর প্রমুখ প্রখ্যাত শিল্পীরা মুগ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন।

জ্ঞানার্জনের ক্ষুধা গোসাঁইজীর এত যে তিনি নিজের পাঠ্য-বিষয় যেমন, সংস্কৃত সাহিত্য, পালি সাহিত্য, বঙ্গসাহিত্য পাঠ করা ছাড়াও, রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে সব ক্লাশ লইতেন সেইসব ক্লাশে নিয়মিত যোগ দিয়া ইংরাজী সাহিত্য,—এবং রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্য বিষয় পাঠ লইতেন। এক সময় ছিল যখন রবীন্দ্র তাঁহার অবসর সময় মত, কখনো “দেহলির” উপর তলায় কখনো বা “উনিজে” ইংরাজী এবং বাঙলা সাহিত্যের ক্লাশ লইতেন। একবার ক্লাশে তিনি ইংরাজী কবি “গ্রে” “এলিজির” অন্তর্ধান কানি, চার্চ-ইয়ার্ড” কবিতাটি এমন সুন্দর ভাবে পড়াইয়াছিলেন যাহা কখনো ভুলিবার নহে। এই সোদিনও ছয়পাতালে, পুরাতন দিনের কথা আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে গোসাঁইজী এই কবিতা পড়ানোর বিষয় উল্লেখ করিয়া বলিলেন—“স্বধাকাত্তর যে সব দিনের কথা মনে পড়লে কত আনন্দ হয়” ইত্যাদি। সত্যিই যে একদিন ছিল যখন আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়ে এবং বিশ্বভারতীতে অর্থাৎ শান্তিনিকেতনে,—বিদ্যাচর্চার, জ্ঞানচর্চার, সঙ্গীত চর্চার, চিত্রাঙ্কন-কলাচর্চার একটা সরস আবহাওয়া ছিল। দেশ-বিদেশের প্রখ্যাত পণ্ডিতেরা (যেমন, ইতালিয়ান অধ্যাপক টুচি, ফরমিচি,—ঐন কোনো-সিলাভা লেভী, লোগানবর পুখুরি ব্যক্তির)—কখনো আমুক্যে কখনো বা অন্যকোনো জায়গায় নিজ নিজ—বিষয় সম্বন্ধে বক্তৃতা দিতেন এবং শান্তিনিকেতনের গুণীজনদের সহিত আলোচনা করিতেন। সে সব আলোচনা আলোচনায় আসরে শান্তিনিকেতনের—বড় বড় ছাত্রদের, সব শিক্ষকদের প্রবেশের অবাধ অধিকার ছিল। এইসব বিদেশী পণ্ডিতেরাও আশ্রমের অনাড়ম্বর সহজ জীবনের সঙ্গে এমন সুন্দর ভাবে যথা সম্ভব নিজেদের দৈনন্দিন জীবন যাত্রাকে খাপ খাওয়াইয়া লইতেন। এইসব প্রখ্যাত পণ্ডিতেরা যখন, একএকটি বিষয় সম্বন্ধে, কখনো শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের সঙ্গে, কখনো বা রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে কখনো বা ক্ষিত্তিমোহন সেন শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়ের সঙ্গে কখনো বা “নিচু বাঙলার” তালি ঘরের বারান্দায় তাত্ত্বিক দ্বিজেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করিতেন তখন মনে হইত এইসব আলোচনা আলোচনার গভীর বিষয় গুলি বুঝিতে পারি বা না পারি তবু এমন সব গুণীজন-সাম্রাজ্যের দৃশ্য শান্তিনিকেতনে না আসিলে কোথায় দেখিতাম। তবু একথা সরলভাবে বলিতে কোনো সংকোচ অনুভব করি না যে, এইসব আলোচনার অনেক কিছু না বুঝিতে পারিলেও, আমার ইচ্ছা-অনিচ্ছায় একটা জ্ঞান-স্বর্গের আদর্শের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধার ভাব মনের মধ্যে সহজেই জাগিত, ও গুণীজনদের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা-নিবেদনের ভাব মনের মধ্যে আপনা-আপনিই জাগিয়া উঠিত। যেমন অযাচিতভাবে দিনের বেলায় অনেক অন্ধকার ঘরের বন্ধ জানালার ফাঁক দিয়া সূর্যের আলো ঘরের মধ্যে প্রবেশ করিয়া ঘরকে কতকাি অন্ধকার হইতে মুক্ত করে। এমন একটি পরিবেশ তখন শান্তিনিকেতনে ছিল যে পরিবেশ যত্নাচর দুর্ভেদ্য। এই পরিবেশের মধ্যেই সম্ভব হইয়াছিল—অন্ধের এবং বিজ্ঞানের শিক্ষক জগদানন্দ বাবুর পক্ষে অবসর সময়ে বেহালা বাজাইয়া নিজেই এবং অন্যকে আনন্দ দেওয়া। সংস্কৃত পণ্ডিত হরিচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের পক্ষে সেতার বাজান। বিধু শেখর ভট্টাচার্য্যের (শাস্ত্রী মহাশয়) পক্ষে এশরাজ বাজান। আর গোসাঁইজীর পক্ষে শিক্ষকতা করিয়াও খোল-মুদ্র বাজান। শুধু কি বাজনা—বাজান। জগদানন্দ বাবু, দিনেন্দ্রবাবু, গোসাঁইজী ক্ষিত্তিমোহন বাবু ইচ্ছার অন্যান্য ছাত্র-শিক্ষকদের (যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথও সকলের সঙ্গে অভিনয় করিতেন) সহিত নানা নাটকের অভিনয়ে অংশ

গ্রহণ করিতেন। তখনকার দিনে অভিনয়াদির জন্য ষ্টেজ তৈরী হইত কখনো বাঁহিপুত্রীর বারান্দায়—কখনো বা একটি ছাত্র-বাসের দুই প্রান্তীয় মেঝে হইতে সামান্য উঁচু, অন্যতর প্রশস্ত প্রান্ত-কর্মে। এই ছাত্রবাসাদির নাম ছিল “নানিগৃহ”। এই গৃহে অভিনয়াদির সময় ষ্টেজ যাহাতে তৈরী করার সুবিধা হয় সেই জন্যই ঘরের দুই প্রান্তে পশ্চিমের আর পূর্বের দিকে ঐককম উচু—আয়ত ছিল। ঐ আয়তগোলাকৃতি ছাত্র-শিক্ষকেরা তত্ত্বপাশ পাতিয়া শুইতেন। সোফা কথায় ঐ ঘরটি ছিল ছাত্রবাস। প্রয়োজনে অভিনয়াদি ঐ ঘরে হইত, এই জন্যই নাম ছিল “নানিগৃহ”। অন্যতরহং সেদিনকার যুগের আশ্রম বিদ্যালয়ের মোটি পরিবেশ ছিল বেশ ঘরোয়া রকমের। এই ঘরোয়া রকমের প্রতিষ্ঠানটি যে সব দিক দিয়া সর্বদা সুন্দর এবং অবাঞ্ছনীয়তা বিবর্জিত ছিল একথা নিশ্চয়ই দ্বিধা নহে। যেখানে নানা রকম পদ্ধতির মানুষ লইয়া কাজ সেখানে কিছু কিছু ক্রান্তি, বিচ্যুতি ঘটা স্বাভাবিক। রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিদ্যাটি, মহান ব্যক্তিত্বের প্রভাব অবাঞ্ছনীয়ভাবেও লেগে মাথা চাড়া দিতে দিতনা। সকলেই নিজের নিজের পটভূমি অপটুদের ভাবকে সংহত সংবত করিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ-পরিবর্তিত আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়ের আদর্শ ও উদ্দেশ্য সফল করিবার জন্য চেষ্টা করিতেন নিজের শক্তি ও যোগ্যতানুসারে। রবীন্দ্রনাথও যতদূর সম্ভব সহকর্মীদের সহিত আন্তরিক প্রীতির সম্বন্ধই চর্চা করিতেন। কাহারো অন্তঃখ-বিস্ত্রণ হইলে দুশ্চিন্তা গ্রস্ত হইতেন এবং যাহাতে উপযুক্ত চিকিৎসার পীড়িত সহকর্মী আরোগ্য লাভ করেন সে চেষ্টাও করিতেন। গোঁসাইজী সন্মুখে রবীন্দ্রনাথের আমাকে লেখা একটি চিরকুটে লিখিত উদ্বিগ্ন ভাবোক্তি এই—

“গোঁসাইজি কেমন আছেন। তোর ছেলের খবর কি। গোঁসাইজীর অন্য যে চিকিৎসাই হোক Kalisulf এবং Fer-phos যেন পালা করে খাওয়ান হয়, নইলে সম্ভাব্য দিকে জর

উঠবে।” এই চিরকুটটিতে তারিখ কিম্বা তাঁর নাম সহি করা নাই, কিন্তু হস্তাক্ষর রবীন্দ্রনাথেরই। এই প্রসঙ্গে আর দুটি চিরকুট এই—

“সুধাকান্ত,

আশা কৈ, তাকে কি আজ দেখেচিস? কেমন আছে তারা?

রবীন্দ্রনাথ”

“তাতুর জর কেমন আছে খবর নিস আর আমার সঙ্গে দেখা করিস।”

শেষের এই চিরকুটটিতেও রবীন্দ্রনাথের নাম-সাক্ষর কিম্বা তারিখ নাই। কিন্তু আমি চিরকুটটিতে সে দিন কার তারিখ লিখিয়া রাখিয়াছিলাম। তারিখটি ছিল সম্ভবত ১৭৮১৩২ সাল। ইহা বোধ হয় অনেকেরই জানা আছে যে হোমিও-প্যাথিক এবং বাইওকেমিক ঔষধ দ্বারা রোগ চিকিৎসার দিকে বিশেষ পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ এবং নিজে ঐ দুই রকমের ঔষধ প্রয়োজনানুসারে নিষ্ঠার সহিত ব্যবহার করিতেন। আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়ের কাহারো অস্থখ হইয়াছে জানিতে পারিলে কখনো কখনো স্বয়ং চিকিৎসাও দায়িত্ব লইতেন। এই বিষয়ে যাহাতে হোমিওপ্যাথিক ও বাইওকেমিক শাস্ত্রের প্রতি আমার অনুরাগ এবং এছাড়া বৃদ্ধি পায় সেজন্য তাঁর চিকিৎসাধীন রোগীদের রোগের লক্ষণাদি বুঝিবার যথেষ্ট সন্যোগ দিতেন। উপরোক্ত চিরকুট হইতে বুঝিতে পারা যাইবে যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বহু ক্ষেত্রে তাঁহার রোগীদের রোগ সম্বন্ধে খোঁজ লইবার জন্য আমাকে রোগীদের কাছে পাঠাইতেন; খোঁজ খবর লইয়া তাঁহার কাছে ফিরিতে বিলম্ব ঘটিলে ব্যস্ত হইয়া ভূতা দ্বারা চিরকুট লিখিয়া আমার কাছে পাঠাইতেন। উপরের চিরকুটের “তাতু” আশ্রম-বিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্রী ছিল। তাতু তাঁহার ডাক নাম, ভাল নাম মনে পড়িতেছেন। “আশা” ছিলেন আশ্রম বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষয়িত্রী। বর্তমানে তিনি স্বাম্যধন্যা শ্রীমতী আশা আশ্রমায়কম্।

উঠ বদভূমি, মাতঃ, ধূমায়ৈ থেকো না আর,
অজেনাতিমিরে তব স্পর্শভাত হল ঘেরো।
উঠেছে নবান রবি, নব-জগতের ভূমি,
নব ‘বাল্মীকী-প্রতিভা’ দেখাওতে পুনর্বার।
যেরো তারে প্রাণ ভরে, দুঃখভুকা যাবে দূরে,
মুচিবে মনের লাগতি, পাবে শান্তি অনিবার।
‘মনিময় বুলা রাশি’, ষোঁজে যাহা দিবানিশি
ওভাবে মজিলে মন খুঁজিতে চাবেনা আর।

—গুরুদাস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

বাল্মীকী প্রতিভা অভিনয় দর্শনে



রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যে অতীত ভারত

প্রবোধচন্দ্র সেন

রবীন্দ্রনাথ একাধারে কবি ও মনীষী। ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাসকেও তিনি দেখেছেন দুই দৃষ্টিতে—কবির দৃষ্টিতে ও মনীষীর দৃষ্টিতে। কবিরূপে তিনি হৃদয় রসে অভিযুক্ত ও কল্পনার রঙে বঞ্চিত করে ভারত ইতিহাসকে নতুন করে সৃষ্টি করেছেন। শুধু তাই নয়, আমাদের চোখেও তিনি মাথিয়ে দিয়েছেন এক 'স্বপনের অঙ্কন'। এই অজ্ঞাতমাথা চোখে প্রাচীন ভারত দেখা দিয়েছে এ নারায়ণ মোহন সূঁতি নিয়ে। এই যে স্বপূন্য প্রাচীন ভারত, যবনিকা তোলামাত্রই তার প্রথম দৃশ্য দেখতে পাই—

নিরঙ্কতাপোবনে বিরাজে যন্তোষ,
পবিত্র ধর্মের দ্বারে যন্তোষ-ধাসন।

— অভিল্লাস (১৮৭৪)

এই রেখাচিত্রটির পূর্ণতর রূপ প্রকাশ পেয়েছে বালক রবীন্দ্রনাথের অন্য একটি রচনায়।—

দাম্ভ্য অর্ঘ্য-মিঃহাসন
স্বাধীন নৃপতিগণে,
স্মৃতির আলোখাপটে রয়েছে চিত্রিত।
দাম্ভ্য দেখি তপোবনে
ধর্মের স্বাধীন মতে
কেমন ঈশ্বর-ব্যাননে রয়েছে ব্যাপ্ত।.....
ধর্মগণ সমস্তরে
তাই সমগান করে
চমকি উঠিছে আশা হিমালয়-ধিরি

ওদিকে ধনুর ধ্বনি
কাঁপায় অরণ্য-ভূমি
নিদ্রাগত যুগগণে চমকিত করি।।
সরস্বতী-নদীকূলে
করিয়া হৃদয় খুলে
গাইছে হরমে আশা স্নমধুর গীত।
বীণাপাণি কুতূহলে
মানসের শতদলে
গাহেন সবগী-বারি করি উখলিত।।

— প্রকৃতির খেদ (১৮৭৫)

প্রাচীন ভারতের এই চিত্র রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিচিন্তকে অতি গভীর ভাবে মুগ্ধ করেছিল। তাই এই ছবি বার বারই ফুটে

উঠেছে তাঁর নানা বয়সের রচনায়। তাঁর অল্প বয়সের রচনা থেকে আর-একটি দৃষ্টান্ত দিচ্ছি।—

তুমি গুনিয়াছ, হে গিরি অমর,
অর্ঘ্যের ঘোর কোদন্তের পর;
তুমি দেখিয়াছ স্বর্ণ-আসনে
যুগিষ্ঠির রাজ্য ভারত-শাসনে;
তুমি গুনিয়াছ স্বরস্বতীকূলে
আঁসি কবি গায়প্রাণ মন খুলে।

রবীন্দ্র হৃদয়ে অঙ্কিত প্রাচীন ভারতচিত্রের মনোহর রংয়ে সরস্বতী নদীর তীর আর ধর্মীদের তপোবন। তাঁর অপেক্ষাকৃত অধিক বয়সে অঙ্কিত এই চিত্রেরই পরিণত রূপ এই।—

অন্ধকার বনাচ্ছারে সরস্বতী তীরে
অস্ত গেছে সন্ধ্যাসূর্য; আগিয়াছে ফিরে
নিষ্কর আশ্রম-আরো ধর্মপুরুষগণ
মস্তকে গমিবভার করি আহরণ
বনাস্তর হতে; কিরায়ে এনেছে ডাকি
তপোবন-গোষ্ঠগৃহে নিষ্কর-আঁপি
শ্রীশ্রী হোমধেনুগণে; করি সমাপন
সন্ধ্যাস্নান, যবে নিলি লয়েছে আসন
ওর গৌতমেরে ধিরি কুনির প্রাদর্শে
হোমাদি-থালোকে।

— দ্বাদশ (১৮৯৫), ('চিত্রা')

এ ছাড়া বৈদিক যুগের কথা। এ যুগের যে রূপ রবীন্দ্রনাথের চোখে ফুটে উঠেছে তার কেন্দ্রস্থলে রয়েছে 'দ্বাদশ' মহিমার পীঠভূমি ধর্মগুরুদের তপোবন-আশ্রম। কালক্রমে এই শাস্ত্র-রসাম্পদ তপোভূমিকে ধরে চতুর্দিকে ছেগে উঠল অস্ত্রের গরিমার কর্মোচ্ছল কীর্তি কেন্দ্রগুলি।—

দিকে দিকে দেখা যায় বিদর্ভ বিরানি,
অযোধ্যা, পাঞ্চাল, কাশী, উদ্ধত-ললাহি.....
অগিরি ধ্বংস আর ধনুর টিকারে,
দীপার সংগ্রীত আর নৃপুংস বাঁকোরে.....
রথের ঘর্ষন মস্ত্রে, পথের কল্লোলে,
নিয়ত ধ্বনিত ধাত কর্মকলরোলে।

— প্রাচীন ভারত (১৮৯৬), ('চৈতালি')

এ হচ্ছে রামায়ণ ও মহাভারতের অঙ্কিত যুগের চিত্র।
এ যুগ অশ্রুপোষের কীর্তি সমুজ্জ্বল যুগ। কিন্তু এ যুগেও—

ব্রাহ্মণের তপোবন অদূরে ত্রিচার,
নিদাঁক গভীর শান্ত সন্মত উদার।

এই যুগের পূর্ণ রূপটি সমগ্রভাবে প্রকাশ পেয়েছে দুর্দিনাত্র
পটভিত্তিতে।—

হোখা মত্ত সর্কীতকর্তৃ কত্রিয় পরিমা,
হোখা স্তব্ধ মহামোহন প্রাক্ষণমহিমা।

— প্রাচীন ভারত, ('চৈতালি')

এক দিকে কত্রিয়, অন্য দিকে ব্রাহ্মণ, এক দিকে রাজধানী
অপর দিকে প্রাগৈয়ন, এই দু'এর মধ্যে কিভাবে মিলন ও সমন্বয়
ঘটেছিল, 'ত্রি চৈতালি' ও অঙ্কিত হয়েছে তিনটি মাত্র লাইনে। —

পবেশিছে বনঝারে ত্রাজি সিংহাসন
মুকুট বিহীন রাজ্য প্রকোশজ্বলে
তাপের মহিমা ছোঁতি লয়ে শীত ভালে।

—তপোবন (১৮৯৬), ('চৈতালি')

রামায়ণ-মহাভারতের আরও বহু চিত্র কুটে উঠেছে বাস্তবিক
প্রতিভা, কালমগ্না, ভাষা ও চন্দ্র, পতিতা, কর্ণকুহীলবাদ,
চিত্রাঙ্গদা পটুতি কাব্য ও নানি-রচনায়।

এরপরে যে যুগ এল, তার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় প্রাচীন
বৌদ্ধ সাহিত্যে। 'অবদানশতক', 'মহাবস্তু-অবদান', প্রভৃতি বৌদ্ধ-
গ্রন্থ অবলম্বনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে যুগেরও বহু চিত্র তুলে ধরেছেন
আমাদের চোখের সম্মুখে। এই চিত্রগুলির অধিকাংশই আঁকা
হয়েছে প্রাচীন কাশী ও কোশল রাজ্যের বিভিন্ন ধরনের কাহিনী
অবলম্বনে। কোশল রাজ্যের রাজধানী শ্রাবস্তি। এই শ্রাবস্তি
নগরীর তিনটি চিত্র আমরা পেয়েছি রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখনী থেকে।
তিনটি চিত্রেই এক দিকে পাই শ্রাবস্তিপুত্রের 'অগ্নি-লগ্নন প্রাপাদ'
প্রভৃতি অতুল ঐশ্বর্যের পরিচয়, আর-এক দিকে পাই বুদ্ধ পচারিত
ত্যাগ ও সোবাধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠ নিদর্শন। শ্রাবস্তিনগরীর গৃহে গৃহে
বুদ্ধশিষ্য অনাগপিণ্ডদের 'শ্রেষ্ঠ-ভিক্ষা' প্রার্থনা এবং সার্থকনামা
অনাগপিণ্ডদের দুঃখিতা লক্ষ্যস্বরূপা ভিক্ষুণী স্ত্রীরার শুণু ভিক্ষা-
পাত্র হাতে দুঃখিতা মধ্যনগরীর নিপুল ক্ষুধা যোঁবার সংকল্প
—এই দুটি চিত্র আমাদের হৃদয়ে অক্ষরবর্ণে আঁকা হয়ে আছে।
তৃতীয় চিত্র পাই শ্রাবস্তিপুত্রের উপাহৃতিত ছেঁতল-বিহারে
বুদ্ধদেবের চরণপদ্মে হৃদয় কারীর অকালপদা-উপহারের
কাহিনীতে। এই অকালপদাটির মূল্যস্বরূপ কোশল-রাজ্যের
অধীশ্বর 'রাজেন্দ্র প্রসেনজিৎ' তাকে বহু স্বর্ণমাথা দিতে চেয়ে-
ছিলেন। সে মূল্য উপেক্ষা করে হৃদয় সোটি অর্পন করল বুদ্ধ
দেবের চরণে, 'বিনিময়ে নিতে শুণু চরণের ধূলি এক কথা'।
অতঃপর উল্লেখযোগ্য কাশীরাজ ও কোশল রাজের বাহুবল তথা
ধর্মবলের প্রতিযোগিতার অপর কাহিনীটি। বিপন্ন বণিকের
দুর্গতি নিবারণের জন্য আশ্রয়প্রার্থিত কোশল রাজের শিরে
মুকুট তুলে দিয়ে কাশীরাজ কিভাবে শেষে ধর্মের ক্ষেত্রে পরাজয়

এড়ালেন—এ কাহিনীটিকে উপলক্ষ্য করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রাচীন
ভারতের যে পরিচয় আমাদের কাছে উপস্থাপিত করেছেন তার
তুলনা নেই।

প্রাচীন কাশীরাজ্যের আরও দুটি চিত্র কুটে উঠেছে 'সামান্য
ক্ষতি' ও 'পরিশোধ'-নামক কবিতা-দুটিতে। প্রথমটিতে আছে
বিলাগিনী রাজমহিষী 'করুণা'র হৃদয়হীন নির্ধুরতা ও কাশী-
রাজ্যের সহদয় ন্যায়পরায়ণতার কথা। আর, দ্বিতীয়টিতে
আছে কাশীনগরীর হৃদয়ী প্রধানা শ্যামা ও তক্ষশিলার বণিক
বহুসেনের কাহিনী। এটিতে কুটে উঠেছে দুনিবার রূপমোহ
ও পাপাবিস্মৃতির হৃদয়ের চিত্র। তা ছাড়া, এটিতে উজ্জ্বল হয়ে
প্রকাশ পেয়েছে তৎকালীন ভারতবর্ষের সমাজ জীবনের বিভিন্ন
দিকের কয়েকটি অপরূপ চিত্র। পরবর্তী কালে এই চিত্রগুলি
আরও বিস্তৃত পটে ও গাঁতের বর্ণে পুনরাঙ্কিত হয়েছে 'শ্যামা'
নৃত্যনাট্যে।

সামান্য উপগুপ্ত ও যৌবন মদে মত্তা নগরীর ননি বাসবদত্তার
কাহিনীটি এক দিকে যেমন প্রাচীন মথুরাপুরীকে স্মরণীয় করে
রেখেছে, অপর দিকে তেমনি অপরূপ আভাষ প্রকাশ করেছে
প্রাচীন ভারতের জীবনাদর্শকে। মগধরাজ অজাতশত্রুর আমলের
একটি সামান্য কাহিনী অবলম্বনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রাচীন ভারতের
চরম মহিমামণ্ডিত আশ্রয়তাপের একটি অবিস্মরণীয় চিত্র অঙ্কন
করেছেন 'পুছারিনী' কবিতাটিতে। ঘটনাস্থল মগধের প্রাচীন
রাজধানী রাজগৃহ, পাত্রী রাজদাসী শ্রীমতী। রবীন্দ্রনাথের
গভীরতর ব্যঙ্গময় ব্যঙ্গ হয়েছে।

রবীন্দ্রলেখনা চিত্রিত এই কাহিনীগুলিকে আশ্রয় করে
প্রাচীন ভারতের এই মহৎ যুগটি যেন আপন মহিমা বলে প্রতি-
মুখুর্টেই আধুনিক কালের হৃদয় হরণ করে গিয়েছে। শ্রাবস্তি,
কাশী, মথুরা ও রাজগৃহকে কেন্দ্র করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর কবি-
দৃষ্টিতে এ যুগের যে বিচিত্র পরিচয় রচনা করেছেন, নিঃস্ব
ঐতিহাসিকের পক্ষে তেমন নিবিড় পরিচয় দেওয়া সম্ভব নয়।
প্রসঙ্গে কবির নিজের কথায় স্মরণ হয়।—

সেই সত্য, যা রচিত তুমি,
ঘটে যা 'তা যব সত্য নহে'। কবি, 'তব মনো ভূমি
রাসের জন্মস্থান, অযোধ্যায় চেয়ে সত্য জেনো।

বহুতঃ আধুনিক কালের বহু পাঠকের কাছেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের
মনোভূমিই প্রাচীন ভারতের 'জন্মস্থান' এবং অনেকাংশেই তা
নিমগ্নাণ ঐতিহাসিক তথ্যের চেয়ে সত্য, এ কথা বললে অন্যায়
হয় না।

বুদ্ধদেবের যুগের পরে রবীন্দ্র লেখনীতে চিত্রিত হয়েছে
কালিদাসের কাল। সে চিত্র আমাদের চোখে কুটে ওঠে স্বথ-
স্বপ্নের মতো। বিংশ শতকের তীব্র আলোকেও সে স্বপ্নের ঘোর
কান্দিতে চায় না, বরং আরও নিবিড় ভাবেই মায়াময় করে তোলে
আমাদের দৃষ্টিকে—চোখে ভেসে ওঠে মালবিকার চাহনির ছবি।—

মালবিকা অনিমিখে
চেয়েছিল পথের দিকে,
সেই চাহনি ভেসে এল
কালো মেঘের ছায়ার সনে।

সেই চাহনির পথ ধরে আমরাও যেন কবির সঙ্গে আমাদের
অলক্ষ্যেই গিয়ে উপনীত হই 'দূরে বড় দূরে স্বপ্নলোকে উজ্জয়িনী
পুরে', যেখানে—

মহাকাল-মন্দিরের মাঝে
তখন গম্ভীরমস্ত্রে সঙ্কারতি বাজে।
জনশূণ্য পণ্যবীথি,—উর্বে য়য় দেখা
জনশূণ্য পণ্যবীথি,—উর্বে য়য় দেখা
অন্ধকার হর্ম্য 'পরে সঙ্কারাশিম রেখা।

প্রিয়ার ভবন
বন্ধিম সংকীর্ণ পথে দুর্গম নির্জন।
দ্বারে আঁকা শঙ্খ চক্র, তারি দুই ধারে
দুটি শিশু নীপতরু পুত্রস্নেহে বাড়ে।
তোরণের হস্ত 'পরে
সিংহের গম্ভীর মূর্তি বসি' দস্তভরে।
প্রিয়ার কপোতগুলি ফিরে এল ঘরে,
ময়ূর গির্দায় মগ্ন স্বর্ণদস্ত 'পরে'
হেনকালে হাতে দীপশিখা
ধীরে ধীরে নামি এল মোর নালসিকা।
— স্বপ্ন (১৮৯৭), ('কল্পনা')

স্বপ্ন যখন ভেঙে যায় তখন হৃদয় যেন ব্যাকুল হয়ে কবিকে
সম্পোধন করে বলে উঠতে চায়—

কামনার মোক্ষধাম উজ্জয়িনী-মাঝে
বিরহিনী প্রিয়তমা যেখায় বিরাজে
সৌন্দর্যের আদিসৃষ্টি—যেখা কে পারিত
লয়ে যেতে তুমি ছাড়া, করি অব্যাহিত
কবির কল্পনাপুরী—অমর ভুবনে।

শুধু 'স্বপ্ন' কবিতায় নয়,—একাল ও সেকাল, মেঘদূত, বর্ষামঙ্গল
মদন ভাস্কর পরে, সেকাল প্রভৃতি বহু কবিতাতেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ
কালিদাসের কালকে আমাদের চোখের সম্মুখে প্রত্যক্ষবৎ তুলে
ধরেছেন। এগুলি কালিদাসের কালের প্রতিচ্ছবি মাত্র নয়,
এগুলি নতুন সৃষ্টি। এসব রচনার আলোকে সেকাল যেন নব-
প্রাণে সঞ্জীবিত হয়ে একালের কাছে বরা দেয়।

কবির দৃষ্টি ও কবির সৃষ্টি এমন করেই প্রাচীন ভারতকে
আমাদের কাছে পরম কমণীয় রূপে উদ্ভাসিত করেছে।

মহাযুগের শিখ মারাঠা ও রাজপুত্রের ঐতিহাসিক চিত্রও
কবিকল্পনার রঙে ও ছন্দের লেখায় বাঁধা পড়ে চিরকালের ভাঙারে
সক্ষিত হয়ে রয়েছে। সে চিত্রশালার দিকে দৃষ্টিপাত করলে
কখনও দেখি—

রঘুনাথ হেথা আসি যবে উতরিলা,
শিখগুরু পড়িছেন ভগবৎ-লীলা।

কখনও দেখি গুরু গোবিন্দ শিষ্যদের আহ্বান করছেন—

তোমরা সকলে এস মোর পিছে,
গুরু তোমাদের সবরে ডাকিছে,
আমার জীবনে লভিয়া জীবন
জাগ রে সকল দেশ।

আর-এক চিত্রে দেখা যায়—

সম্মুখে চলে মোগল-সৈন্য
উড়িয়ে পথের ধূলি,
ডিম শিখের মুণ্ড লইয়া
বর্শাফলকে তুলি।
শিখ সাত শত চলে পশ্চাতে
বাজে শৃঙ্খল গুলি।

এ তো গেল শিখ ইতিহাসের চিত্র। মারাঠার ইতিহাসের চিত্রও
কম উজ্জল নয়। প্রথমেই পাই রাজা শিবাচ্চি ও তাঁর গুরু
রামদাসের চিত্র।

বগিয়া প্রভাতকালে
সেতারার দুর্গভালে
শিবাচ্চি হেরিলা একদিন—
রামদাস, গুরু তার,
ত্রিঙ্গা মাগি দ্বার দ্বার
ফিরিছেন যেন অরণীন।

অতঃপর দেখি মারাঠা 'বিচারক' নায়াদীশ রাম-শাক্তীর চিত্র—

ব্রাহ্মণ আসি দাঁড়াল সম্মুখে
নায়াদীশ রামশাক্তী।
দুই বাজ তাঁর তুলিয়া উধাও
কহিলেন ডাকি,—'রঘুনাথ রাও,
নগর ছাড়িয়া কোথা চলে যাও,
না লয়ে পাপের শাস্তি?'

দুর্দান্ত প্রতাপ মারাঠা নায়কের সম্মুখে নিভীক নায়নিষ্ঠা ব্রাহ্মণের
এই অপূর্ব চিত্র যেন মারাঠা ইতিহাসকেই চিরকালের মতো
ধোরবোজ্জ্বল করে রেখেছে। মারাঠা-ইতিহাসের আর-একটি
চিত্র পাই 'সত্য'-নামক নাট্যকবিতানিতে। এই করুণ কাহিনী-
নিতে ফুটে উঠেছে মারাঠি কন্যা অমাবাই-এর একনিষ্ঠ পাকি-
বৃত্তা ও নিভীক আত্মত্যাগের ছবি। মারাঠি বীরাত্মনা লক্ষ্মীবাইও
রবীন্দ্রনাথের হৃদয় থেকে শ্রদ্ধার অঙ্কুর লাভ করেছেন। কিন্তু
তা কবিতারূপে প্রকাশ পায়নি, পেয়েছে কিশোর কবির লেখনী
রচিত একটি গদ্যচিত্ররূপে। এই চিত্ররচনায় প্রবৃত্ত হবার
পূর্বেই তিনি এই বীর নারীকে শ্রদ্ধানিবেদন করেছেন এই
বলে—

আমরা সর্বাপেক্ষা বীরাত্মনা বানসীর রাণী
লক্ষীবাইকে ভক্তিপূর্বক নমস্কার করি।

এ স্থলে এই বীরাত্মনার চরিত্রচিত্রণের বিশদ পরিচয় দেওয়া
নিম্নপ্রয়োজন।

রাজপুত-ইতিহাসকে লক্ষ্য করে পরিণত জীবনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ
লিখেছেন—

জীবন-মৃত্যুর দ্বন্দ্ব মাঝে
সেদিন যে দুন্দুভি মন্দিরায়ছিল,
তার প্রতিধ্বনি বাজে প্রাণের কুহরে গুমরিয়া।
নির্ভয় দুর্দান্ত খেলা, মনে হয় সেই তো সহজ,
দূরে নিক্ষেপিয়া ফেলা
আপনারে নিঃসংশয় নির্ভুর সংকটে।

— রাজপুতানা (১৯৩৮), ('নবজাতক')

রবীন্দ্রনাথের আঁকা রাজপুত নারীপুরুষের কয়েকটি রেখাচিত্রের মধ্যে রাজপুতনার জাতীয় চরিত্রের এই অতুলনীয় মহিমাই ফুটে উঠেছে অপূর্ব উজ্জ্বলো।

অথাত অচলগড়ে সামান্য একজন ভূস্বামী গিরোচিপতি স্বরতান, যাকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন 'ক্ষত্রকুল-সিংহশিশু' এবং বর্ণনা করেছেন 'অশনি ভরা বিদ্যুৎ বলে, তিনি যে-ভাবে উচ্চিশির উচৈ রেখে আরওজেবের দরবারে প্রবেশ করে বাদ-শাহের কাছ থেকে সম্মান আদায় করেছিলেন, সে কাহিনী অচল-গড়ের অবজ্ঞাত ইতিহাসকে চিরকালের কাছে স্মরণীয় করে রাখল। রতনরাও রাজা, কে রাখত তাঁকে স্মরণ করে? কিন্তু যে ন্যায়নিষ্ঠতার শক্তিতে তিনি অপরাধী পুত্রের মৃত্যুদণ্ডের অনিচ্ছিত রইলেন, সে কথা স্মরণ করে রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখনী তার জন্য যে আসন রচনা করেছে, ইতিহাসের বহু খাতামা ধীর-পুরুষের ভাগ্যেও তা মেলে না। তৎকালীন রাজপুত নরনারীর পক্ষে প্রাণ দেওয়া ক'ত সহজ ছিল, তার পরিচয় পাই নকল গড়, পণরক্ষা, ও বিবাহ এই তিনটি কবিতায়। চিতোর-রাণার অতি সামান্য হারাবংশী ভূতা কুন্তু নিজের বংশমর্যাদা রক্ষার জন্য যে-ভাবে প্রভুর বিব্রন্ধে বিদ্রোহ করে একাকী 'নকল বুদ্ধিগড়' রক্ষা করতে গিয়ে রাণার সেনার হাতে প্রাণ দিলেন তার তুলনা ভারত-ইতিহাসেও দুর্লভ। যে তরসিং মিকির মর্যাদা রক্ষার জন্য নিজের মাথা দিয়েছিলেন, একমাত্র তাঁর সম্মুখে হারাবংশী বীর কুন্তের তুলনা হতে পারে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—

রক্তে তাহার ধন্য হল
নকল বুদ্ধিগড়।

হারাবংশী কুন্তের এই আয়তন শুধু নকল বুদ্ধিগড় নয়, মানুষের ইতিহাসই ধন্য হয়েছে। আর, তাকে ধন্য করেছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখনীস্পর্শ।

এমনি করেই ধন্য হয়েছে আজমীর গড়ের দুর্গেশ দমরাজের স্মৃতিটিও, যিনি 'প্রভুর আদেশে বীরের ধর্মে বিরোধ' মৌল্যের জন্য অতি অন্যায়সেই তাগ করলেন নিজের প্রাণ। এইভাবে অতি প্লানিকর পরাজয়ের মধ্যেও তিনি রাজপুত-গৌরবকে অমান রেখে গেলেন।

যে মেক্সি-রাজকুমার প্রভুর মর্যাদা রক্ষার জন্যে বিয়ের আসন থেকেই 'বরের বেশে মৌল্যের পরি' শিরে ঘোড়ায় চড়ি' ছুটে চললেন রণক্ষেত্রে এবং সেখানে রাজপুত বীরের মতোই মৃত্যুবরণ করে 'বরের বেশে মতি'র মালা গলে' আরোহণ করলেন চিতা-শয্যা, আর ওই চিতাশয্যাতেই এসে মিলিত হলেন যে কনের রাজ-পরা রাজকুমারী বধু—এই চিরদম্পতিযুগল রাজপুত গৌরবের অক্ষয় সিংহাসনে অভিষিক্ত হলেন আমাদের অগ্রদূতারা বর্ষণে রবীন্দ্রোচ্চারিত অমৃত মন্ত্র বলে।

শ্রীমতী দাসী, উপেক্ষিত তরু গিং, রাজভূতা কুন্ত, অথাত দমরাজ, অজ্ঞাতনামা ক্ষেত্রিপতি ও তাঁর অপরিণীতা বধু অমর মৃত্যুর অক্ষীয়মাণ স্নিদ্ধালোকে রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাত থেকে যে মহিমামণ্ডিত বরমালা লাভ করেছেন, ইতিহাসের বড় বড় বীর নায়কদের পক্ষেও তা লোভনীয় অথচ অলভ্য।

সর্বশেষে উল্লেখযোগ্য 'হোরিখেলা'-নামক অপূর্ব কবিতাটি। এটি রাজপুতবীর বা তাগমহিমার কাহিনী নয়। এই কবিতাটি যে দিক থেকে বিচার্য নয়। কিন্তু এই কাহিনীটিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছন্দের রেখায় ও কল্পনার রঙে তদানীন্তন কালের রাজপুতজাতির যে চরিত্রবৈশিষ্ট্য ও জীবনচিত্র ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন, কোনো শিরীর নিপুণতার তুলিকাতেও তা সম্ভব হত কিনা সন্দেহ। কোনো শহরের ভূনাথ রাজার রানী ও তাদের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী পাঠান কেসর খাঁ উভয়েই ইতিহাসে অথাত, আর কেতুনপুরের বকুল-রাণানে তাদের মধ্যে যে চমক-লাগানো হোরিখেলা হল, ইতিহাস তার কথাও জানে না। কিন্তু কবির কল্পনা যে ইতিহাসকে লজ্জা দিয়ে তার তুচ্ছতম কাহিনীকেও অপূর্বতার স্বপ্নলোকে উন্নীত করতে পারে, তার পরিচয় আছে এই কাহিনীটিতে।—

গুরু হল হোরির মাতামাতি
উড়তেছে ফাগু রাঙা সন্ধ্যাকাশে।
নব বরণ ধরল বকুল ফুলে,
রক্তরেণু ধরল তরুণুলে,
ভয়ে পাখি কৃজন গেল ভুলে,
রাজপুতানীর উচ্চ উপহাসে।
কোথা হতে রাঙা কুজ্জালিকা
লাগল যেন রাঙা সন্ধ্যাকাশে॥
এমন সময় সংসা—
না'তাস বেয়ে ওড়না গেল উড়ে,
পড়ল খসে ঘাবরা ডিল যত।
মধ্বে যেন কোথা হতে কে রে
বাধির হল নারীর সজ্জা ছেড়ে,
একশত বীর খিরল পাঠানগরে
পুষ্প হতে একশো গাপের মত।
স্বপ্নসম ওড়না গেল উড়ে,
পড়ল খসে ঘাবরা ডিল যত॥
যে পথ দিয়ে পাঠান এসেছিল
সে পথ দিয়ে ফিরল নাক তারা॥

আমাদের চোখেও যেন স্বপ্নের যোর লোপে যায়। মনে হয় যেন আমাদের চোখের সামনেই একটি দিচিত্র স্বপ্ন কাহিনী চলচ্চিত্র-পটের উপরে দ্রুত অভিনীত হয়ে মহা বিলীন হয়ে গেল। মনে হয় এ কাহিনীটিও যেন ক্ষুধিত-পাষাণের কাহিনীর মতোই অলীক অথচ অপূর্ব। বস্তুতঃ হোরিখেলার কাহিনী একান্ত-ভাবেই অলীক নয়।

ইতিহাস-বিচারের ক্ষেত্রেও রবীন্দ্রনাথের দুই রূপ—এক রূপে তিনি চরিত্রপূজারি, অন্যরূপে সত্যসন্ধানী।

'যত মানবের গুরু মহৎ জনের
চরণ-চিহ্ন ধরিয়া',

যাঁর হৃদয়ে নিরন্তর আকুতি ছিল—

‘জগতে যত মহৎ আছে
হইব নত সবার কাছে’,

জীবনের অন্তিম প্রান্তে দাঁড়িয়েও যিনি বলেছিলেন,

‘তাদের সম্মানে মান নিয়ে
বিশ্বে যারা চিরমরণীয়’,

তঁার চিত্ত যে ভারত-ইতিহাসের মহৎ চরিত্রের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধার অর্ঘ্য-
দানে উৎসুক হবে তা বিচিত্র নয়।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যাঁকে অস্ত্রের মধ্যে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ মানব বলে উপলব্ধি
করেছিলেন এবং যাঁকে ‘একান্তে নিভুতে’ তথা সর্বসমক্ষে বারবার
প্রণাম নিবেদন করেছিলেন, মৃত্যুর অত্যাশঙ্ক্য পূর্বেও সেই বুদ্ধ-
দেবকে লক্ষ্য করে তিনি বলেছিলেন—

এ বরাহ জন্ম নিয়ে যে মহামানব
সব মানবের জন্ম সাধক করেছে একদিন.....
তঁাহারে সমরণ করি’ জাণিলাম মনে—
প্রবেশি মানবলোকে আশি বর্ষ আগে
এই মহাপুরুষের পূণ্যভাগী হয়েছি আমিও।

—৬-সংখ্যক কবিতা (১৩৪৭ বৈশাখ ২৫), (জন্মদিনে)
বুদ্ধদেবের পড়েই রবীন্দ্রনাথ শ্রদ্ধা নিবেদন করেছেন আদর্শ
নৃপতি প্রিয়দর্শ অশোককে।—

এই ভারতবর্ষে একদিন মহামহাত্মা অশোক তাঁহার রাজশক্তিকে
মঙ্গল সাধন কার্যে নিযুক্ত করিয়াছিলেন। রাজশক্তির মাদকতা
যে কী স্তম্ভীপ, তাহা আমরা সকলেই জানি।.....সেই বিশাল
রাজশক্তিকে মহারাজ অশোক মঙ্গলের দাসত্বে নিযুক্ত করিয়া-
ছিলেন; তৃপ্তিহীন ভোগকে বিসর্জন দিয়া তিনি শান্তহীন সেবাকে
গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন।.....এই মঙ্গলশক্তি চক্রবর্তী রাজাকে আশ্রয়
করিয়া সমস্ত মনুষ্যকে সমুজ্জ্বল করিয়া তুলিয়াছে। অশোকের
মধ্যে মঙ্গলশক্তির এই যে মহান্ আবির্ভাব, ইহা আমাদের গৌরবের
ধন হইয়া আজও আমাদের মধ্যে শক্তিসঞ্চার করিতেছে।

—উৎসবের দিন (‘ধর্ম’)

প্রাচীন ভারতের ইতিহাসে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে তৃতীয় ব্যক্তিকে
শ্রদ্ধা জানিয়েছেন, তিনি হচ্ছেন কবি কালিদাস। শুধু সৌন্দর্য-
সৃষ্টির জন্য নয়, চার দিকের কলুষজ্বালের মধ্যেও তিনি যে
কলাগণের ‘অমূল্য আদর্শকে উদ্বেগু’ তুলে ধরেছিলেন, তারই জন্যে
রবীন্দ্রনাথ কালিদাসকে শ্রদ্ধাদান করেছেন।—

জীবনমহন্যবসি নিজে করি পান,
অমৃত যা উঠেছিল করে গেছ দান।
—কাব্য (১৮৯৬), (‘চৈতলি’)

মহাযুগের যে মহাপুরুষদের উদ্দেশ্যে তিনি অর্ঘ্য নিবেদন
করেছেন, তাঁর এক দিকে আছেন রামানন্দ, নানক, চৈতন্য,
কবীর, দাদু, রত্নজব-প্রমুখ ধর্ম নায়কগণ, এবং আর-এক দিকে
আছেন আকবর, গুরু গোবিন্দ ও শিবাজি, এই তিনজন রাষ্ট্রনায়ক।

বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে এঁদের সকলেরই লক্ষ্য ছিল মানুষে মানুষে ভেদ-
বিরোধ ঘুচিয়ে সমগ্র ভারতের এক্য প্রতিষ্ঠা।

কবীর সম্বন্ধে তাঁর অভিমত এই।—

তিনি ভারতবর্ষের সমস্ত বাহ্য আবর্জনাকে ভেদ করিয়া
তাঁহার অন্তরের শ্রেষ্ঠ সামগ্রীকেই ভারতবর্ষের সত্যসাধনা বলিয়া
উপলব্ধি করিয়াছিলেন, এইজন্য তাঁহার পন্থীকে বিশেষরূপে
ভারতপন্থী বলা হইয়াছে।

—ভারতবর্ষে ইতিহাসের ধারা (১৯১২), (‘ইতিহাস’)

এই এক্যসাধকদের সম্বন্ধে তিনি অন্যত্র বলেছেন—

মহাযুগে অচল সংস্কারের পিঙ্করস্মার মূলে বেরিয়ে পড়েছেন
প্রত্যাঘের অতন্ত্রিত পাখি, গেয়েছেন তাঁরা আলোকের অভিবন্দন-
গান সামাজিক জড়পুঙ্কের উর্ধ্বে আকাশে।.....সেই মুক্তিদূতদের
মধ্যে একজন ছিলেন কবীর, তিনি নিজেকে ভারতপথিক বলে
জানিয়েছেন। নানা জন্ম জন্মের মধ্যে এই ভারতপথিকে
যাঁরা দেখতে পেয়েছিলেন তাঁদের মধ্যে আর একজন ছিলেন
দাদু।.....সেদিন আর এক সাধু, ভারতের পথ যাঁর কাছে ছিল
সুগোচর, তাঁর নাম রত্নজব।.....এই ভারতপথিকেরা যে
মিলনের কথা বলেছিলেন সে মিলন মনুষ্যত্বের সাধনায়, ভেদ-
বুদ্ধির অহংকার থেকে মুক্তিলাভের সাধনায়।.....এই একের
পথ যথার্থ ভারতের পথ। সেই পথের পথিক আধুনিক কালে
রামমোহন রায়।

—ভারতপথিক রামমোহন রায় ১ (১৯৩৩), (‘চারিত্র পূজা’)

বিশেষ গুরুত্ব নিবেচনায় এ কথারই পুনরুক্তি করা হয়েছে
‘ভারতপথিক রামমোহন রায়’—নামক দ্বিতীয় প্রবন্ধে।—

ভারতবর্ষে রামমোহন রায়ের যাঁরা পূর্ববর্তী ছিলেন তাঁদের
মধ্যে অন্যতম কবীর নিজেকে বলেছিলেন ভারতপথিক।
ভারতকে তিনি দেখতে পেয়েছিলেন মহাপথরূপে। এই পথে
ইতিহাসের আদিকাল থেকে চলমান মানবের ধারা প্রবাহিত।
.....রামমোহন রায় ভারতের এই পথের চৌমাথায় এসে
দাঁড়িয়েছিলেন, ভারতের যা সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ দান তাই নিয়ে।

এই প্রসঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেকেও এই পথের পথিক বলেই
জানিয়েছেন, আর যে রচনানিতে ভারতবর্ষকে মহামানবের পূণ্য
মিলনভার্থ বলে বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে সৌন্দর্যে তিনি অভিহিত
করেছেন ‘ভারতপথের গান’ বলে।

বিশ্বমানবের যে মিলনসাধনাকে তিনি ভারতপথ বলে
অভিহিত করেছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতে তাই হচ্ছে ভারতবর্ষের
বহুশতাব্দীব্যাপী স্তম্ভী ইতিহাসের মূল কথা।

মহা যুগে কবীরপ্রমুখ ভারতসাধকরা যে পথের পথিক
ছিলেন ধর্মের ক্ষেত্রে, রাষ্ট্রের ক্ষেত্রে সেই পথকেই স্বীকার করে
নিয়েছিলেন মহানতি আকবর। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাই তাঁকে ‘মহাদাশয়
স্বপ্নজন্মা পুরুষ’ বলে শ্রদ্ধা জানিয়েছেন। বলেছেন—

আকবর সকল ধর্মের বিরোধ ভঙান করিয়া একটি প্রেমের
এক্য স্থাপনের চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন।.....তিনি নিজের হৃদয় মধ্যে
একটি একের আদর্শ লাভ করিয়াছিলেন, তিনি উদার হৃদয়
লইয়া শ্রদ্ধার সহিত সকল ধর্মের অন্তরে প্রবেশ করিয়াছিলেন।
তিনি একাত্মতার সহিত, নিষ্ঠার সহিত, হিন্দু মুসলমান খ্রীস্টান
পারসিক ধর্মগুরুদিগের ধর্মালোচনা শ্রবণ করিতেন ও তিনি হিন্দু
রমণীকে অন্তঃপুরে, হিন্দু অমাত্যদিগকে মন্ত্রি সভায়, হিন্দু ধীর-

গণকে সেনানায়কতায় প্রধান আসন দিয়াছিলেন। তিনি কেবল রাজনীতির দ্বারা নহে, প্রেমের দ্বারা সমস্ত ভারতবর্ষকে, রাজা ও প্রজাকে এক করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন।

—ইংরেজ ও ভারতবাসী (১৮৯৫), ('রাজা-প্রজা')

এই প্রবন্ধটি যে সভায় পঠিত হয় তার অধিনায়ক ছিলেন স্বয়ং বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র। রবীন্দ্রনাথের উক্ত অভিমতকে তাঁর অনুমোদন লাভ করেছিল, যেকথা জানা যায় রবীন্দ্রজীবনী থেকে। বঙ্কিম-চন্দ্রও যে অনুরূপ অভিমত পোষণ করতেন, তার প্রমাণ আছে বঙ্কিমসাহিত্যে। তার নিদর্শনস্বরূপ বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের একটি উক্তি এখানে উদ্ধৃত করছি।—

আমরা কুতবউদ্দিনের অধীন উত্তর-ভারতবর্ষকে পরতন্ত্র ও পরাধীন বলি, আকবরের শাসিত ভারতবর্ষকে স্বতন্ত্র ও স্বাধীন বলি।

—ভারতবর্ষের স্বাধীনতা এবং পরাধীনতা, ('বিবিধ প্রবন্ধ'—১)

আকবর সম্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অভিমত-পয়গু ফিরে আসা যাক। 'আকবর যে-একটি প্রেমের আদর্শে পুণ্ড-ভারতবর্ষকে এক করিবার চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন', সোটি তৎকালীন ভারতপথিক ধর্মসাধকদের কর্মপ্রচেষ্টার সঙ্গে এক সূত্রেই বাঁধা ছিল। অর্থাৎ রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতে আকবরও ছিলেন চিরন্তন ভারতপথেরই পথিক। তিনি বলেন—

মুসলমান যখন ভারতে রাজত্ব করিতেছিল তখন আমাদের রাষ্ট্রীয় চাকল্যের ভিতরে ভিতরে একটা আধ্যাত্মিক উদ্‌বোধনের কাজ চলিতেছিল। সেইজন্য বৌদ্ধযুগের অশোকের মতো মোগল সম্রাট আকবরও কেবল রাষ্ট্রসাম্রাজ্য নয়, একটি ধর্মসাম্রাজ্যের কথা চিন্তা করিয়াছিলেন। এইজন্যই সে সময়ে পরে পরে কত হিন্দু সাধু ও মুসলমান সূফির অভ্যুদয় হইয়াছিল, যাঁরা হিন্দু ও মুসলমান ধর্মের অতুলন মিলনক্ষেত্রে এক মহেশ্বরের পূজা বহন করিয়াছিলেন।

—স্বাধিকার প্রমত্ত (১৯১৮), ('কালান্তর')

রবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টিতে মধ্যযুগের ভারত-ইতিহাসের এটাই হল মারকথা।

“আরুজের ভারত যবে করিতেছিল খান্ খান্”, তখন

‘খণ্ড ছিন্ন বিক্ষিপ্ত ভারত’কে ‘এক-ধর্ম-রাজ্য-পাশে’ বাঁধবার যে প্রয়াস দেখা দিয়াছিল, তাও আকস্মিক নয়। তার মধ্যেও ভারত-ইতিহাসের চিরন্তন ধর্মনিষ্ঠা ও এক্যপ্রবণতাই সক্রিয় ছিল। অর্থাৎ আমাদের জাতীয় জীবনের রথ তখনও সূচির-কালীন ঐতিহ্য-নির্দিষ্ট ভারতপথ ধরেই পরম পরিণতির দিকে অগ্রসর হচ্ছিল। সে পথ ‘পতন-অভ্যুদয়-বন্ধন’, কিন্তু তার পরিণতি নিরুদ্দিষ্ট বা লক্ষ্যহীন নয়। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—

মোগল শাসনকালে শিবাজিকে আশ্রয় করিয়া যখন রাষ্ট্র চেষ্টা মাথা তুলিয়াছিল, তখন সে চেষ্টা ধর্মকে লক্ষ্য করিতে ভুলে নাই। শিবাজির গুরু রামদাস এই চেষ্টার প্রধান অবলম্বন ছিলেন।

—ধর্মপদং (১৯০৪), ('প্রাচীন সাহিত্য')

এ সম্বন্ধে তিনি অন্যত্র বলেছেন—

বহুদিন হইতে বহু ধর্মবীর দেশের উচ্চনীচের মধ্যে.....যোগ-সাধন করিতেছিলেন।.....মারাঠায় ধর্মাবলম্বনে দেশের সমস্ত লোক একত্র মণ্ডিত হইতেছিল। শিবাজির প্রতিভা সেই মন্বন হইতে উদ্ভূত হইয়াছে। তাহা সমস্ত দেশের ধর্মোদ্‌বোধনের সহিত জড়িত, এই জন্যই দেশের শক্তিতে তিনি ধনা ও তাঁহার শক্তিতে দেশ ধনা।.....বস্তুতঃ তাঁহার সাধনা সমস্ত দেশেরই ধর্মসাধনার একটি বিশেষ প্রকাশ।

ধর্মের উদার একা দেশের ভেদবুদ্ধিকে নিরস্ত করিয়া দিলে তবেই দেশের অস্বনিহিত সমস্ত শক্তি একত্র মিলিত হইয়া অপ্রাণীয় সফলতা লাভ করে, ইহাই মহারাষ্ট্র-ইতিহাসের শিক্ষা।

—শিবাজি ও মারাঠাভাতি (১৯০৮), ('ইতিহাস')

বিংশ শতকে ভারতবর্ষে বিভিন্ন সময়ে যে-সব রাষ্ট্রচেষ্টা দেখা দিয়াছে, তাকে সফলতার পথে পরিচালিত করবার উদ্দেশ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বার বার গুরু মহারাষ্ট্রের নয়, সমগ্র ভারত-ইতিহাসেরই এই মূলগত শিক্ষার প্রতি আমাদের দৃষ্টিকে আকর্ষণ করেছেন। বর্তমান সময়ে স্বাধীন ভারতেও দেশের এক্যপ্রতিষ্ঠান ও এক্য-রক্ষার পক্ষে ভারত-ইতিহাসের এই শিক্ষার কথা আমরা যেন না ভুলি ॥

সরলতা মধুরতা
ভরলতা কোমলতা
এক সঙ্গে মিশাইয়া কে ছড়ালে ওর গায় ?
বিমিত করিতে বিশ্ব
কে রচিল তেন দৃশ্য ?
এ সৃতি প্রতিভাময়ী ভরপুর প্রতিভায়।
কোমল কমল দিয়ে
এমন কোমল মেয়ে
কে গড়েছে প্রভাতের প্রভা মাখাইয়া তায়

—বান্ধিকী প্রতিভা অভিনয় দর্শনে

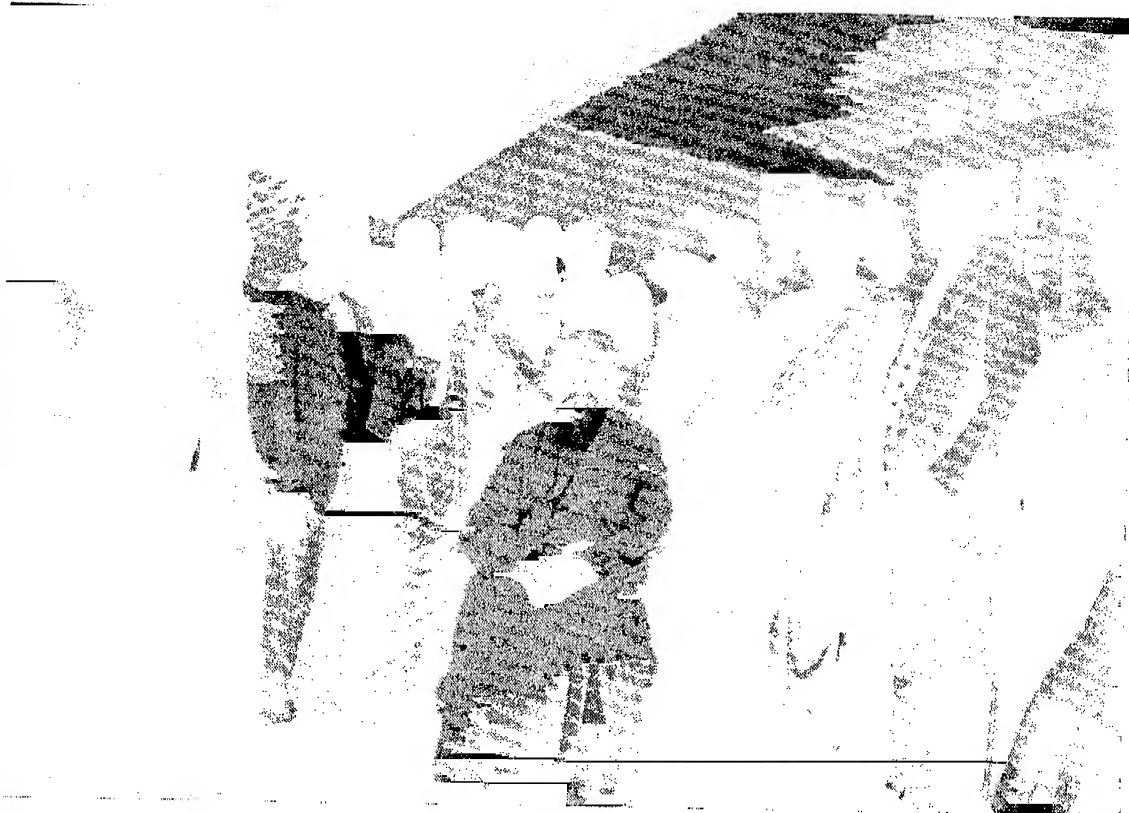
কাক শিরোমণি সেই
তার গো তুলনা নেই
বন্য কাক কান্না তার শত বন্য সে জানায়।
এতভাব ভরা ছবি
দেখেছে কি কোনো কবি
আজিকার যাত্রা এই নিবিড় বনের গায় ?
নিখিল বুঝাও ভুলি
একদৃষ্টে যোগি মেলি
চেয়ে আছি ওর পানে স্বপ্নময়ী পিপাসায়।

—রাজকৃষ্ণ রায়



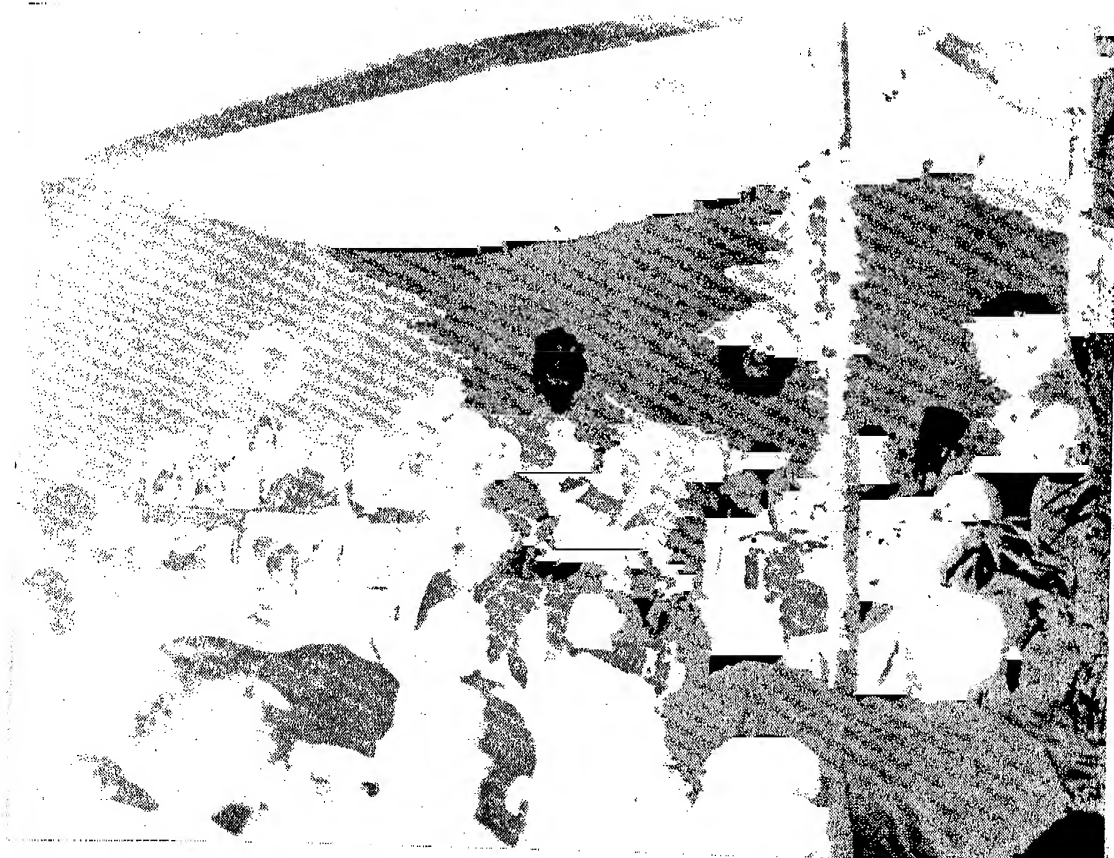
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১৯১৬



জাপান যাত্রী - ১৯২৪

ON THE EVE OF DEPARTURE
TO JAPAN - 1924



সভামঞ্চে
সাহিত্য সম্মেলন চন্দননগর - ১৯৩৭

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প্রতিভার মূর্তি

তীরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত



রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্পর্কে জানী ও জানী দেশী বিদেশী বহু মনীষী বহু কথা বলেছেন—সবই মূল্যবান কথা—তবু সত্যি বলতে কি, তাতে আমার মন ওঠে নি। মনে হয়েছে সব যেন কথা হয়নি, কিছু বাকী থাকে গেল। এর কারণ, আমাদের জীবনের প্রতীকতম উপলক্ষকে আমরা যেমন মনের নাথালে পাই কিংবা ভাষার নাথালে পাইনা, কোন বিরাট মানুষ সম্পর্কে যখন ভাবি তখনও সেই অবস্থাই পাই। আমরা তাঁকে অনুভব করতামি পাই আমাদের প্রকাশ্য চিন্তা কিংবা প্রকাশযোগ্য ভাষার প্রতিজ্ঞায় ততখানি পাইনা। ইংরেজ কবি ম্যাথু আর্নল্ড তাঁদের কবিত্বকে উল্লেখ করে বলেছেন,—তোমার সম্পর্কে আমাদের অস্বাভাবিক জিজ্ঞাসা ঘাট ও যে জিজ্ঞাসা শেষ হয় নি—তোমার রহস্যের অন্ত আমরা খুঁজে পাইনি। তুমি যেন এক অস্বাভাবিক পর্বতশিখর, কোন জ্যোতিষ্ক লোকে মস্তক উন্নত করে তুমি দাঁড়িয়ে ঘাট, সেখানে আমাদের দৃষ্টি পৌঁছায় না—আমরা নিচে বহুদূরে পর্বত পদমূলে দাঁড়িয়ে বিমূর্ত বিষময়ে হতবাক।

কোন অপ্রাশংস্যা ঘটনা কিংবা কোন বিরূপ ব্যক্তির সম্পর্কে মানুষের যে অনুভূতি সোটা প্রধানত বিষময়ের অনুভূতি। বিষময়ের বিশ্লেষণ মস্তক নয় এমন কথা বলবনা কিংবা বিশ্লেষণ করতে কোনেই বিষময়ের অপমান হলে এমনও মনে করি। তথাপি স্বীকার করতে হবে যে যার যার জিনিষ বিশ্লেষণ গ্রাহ্য নয়। অর্থাৎ প্রতি প্রকৃতির জন্যে কবিতাকে বিশ্লেষণ করা যায় কিন্তু সেই চাকনির কাঁকে কবিতাকে কোথায় যেন পাল যায়। বিরূপ ব্যক্তির বোঝাও এই। ব্যক্তির আসল মহিমাকে সূক্ষ্মতম বিশ্লেষণেও অনেক সময় বলা পড়ে না। সেসম্পর্কিত বিরাট প্রতিভাকে বিশ্লেষণ করে বলা যায়। ঘর রচিত হয়েছে তথাপি সেসম্পর্কিত জেনে মন তিনশত বৎসর পরেও ম্যাথু আর্নল্ড বলেছেন, ভাবলে অবাক লাগে আমাদের এই মর্ত্যভূমিতে একদিন তুমি এসেছিলে, কি দুল্লভ শক্তিবলে মানব জীবনের অপার রহস্য তুমি ভেদ করে গেলে! কী চোখে কী তুমি দেখেছিলে কে জানে—আমরা ক্ষুদ্র মানব, আমরা ভাবি আর বিমূর্ত হই।

এই বিষময়ের অনুভূতির মধ্যেই ম্যাথু আর্নল্ড সেসম্পর্কিত জেনেছিলেন। এই জানাই সব চাইতে বড় করে জানা। বিরূপ মানুষের বিরূপকে উপলক্ষ করতে হলে তাঁকে সর্বসাকল্যে জানতে হয়। এখানে উল্লেখযোগ্য যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্পর্কেও এই জাতীয় কথা আমরা একবার শুনেছি এবং আমার মন তাতেই পরিতৃপ্ত হয়েছে। বাস্তবিক পক্ষে দিক মনের মত কথা সেই একবারই শুনেছি—সেটি ত্রিশ বছর আগে কবির সপ্ততিতম জন্মতিথিতে, তাঁর জন্মদী উৎসবে। কলকাতার নাগরিক সম্বন্ধীয় উদযুক্ত প্রথম বাৎসরিক বাংলা দেশের অন্তরের

কথা যেমন ভাবে প্রকাশ পেয়েছিল এমন আর কখনো হয়নি—“কবিত্ব, তোমার প্রতি চাহিয়া আমাদের বিষময়ের অন্ত নাই” (শরৎচন্দ্র)—এই একটি বাৎসরিক বা প্রকাশ পেয়েছে কবির শতাব্দির নয়া ওখাবদীর নামান্বী রচনা করলেও তা প্রকাশ পেতনা। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এক পরম বিষময়—এই একটি কথা বললে আর কিছুই বলার বাকী থাকে না।

ত্রিশ বছর পূর্বে এই স্মৃতিচারণ যারা উদযুক্ত করেছিলেন তাঁরা অনেকই ইহলোক ত্যাগ করেছেন, আমার মত সেদিন যারা বাক ছিলেন তাঁরা আজ বৃদ্ধ। ইতিমধ্যে এক যুগ কেটে গিয়েছে। যুগ পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিরও পরিবর্তন হয়েছে। আজকের দিনে অনেকে পূর্বোক্ত উক্তিই অথবা প্রযুক্ত গদ গদ ভাষা বলে উড়িয়ে দেবার চেষ্টা করেন। গদ গদ ভাষা আমিও বিশ্বাস করি। অল্পভয়ের ভক্তির আতিশয্য আর তথাকথিত বুদ্ধিবাদী পণ্ডিতমণ্ডলের প্রশংসা-কাতরতা দুই-ই সমগোত্রীয়। দুইয়েরই জন্ম অন্ধতা থেকে। মনকে অন্ধতা থেকে মুক্ত রেখে স্বচ্ছ দৃষ্টিতে বস্তুটুকু দেখেছি তাতে বলতে কোনই বাধা নেই যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চাইতে বড় কবি পৃথিবীতে জন্মগ্রহণ করেছেন, তাঁর চাইতে বের বড় নাট্যকারের জন্ম হয়েছে, উপন্যাসিক তো বটেই। একথা স্বীকার করেও আবার বলতে বাধা নেই যে তাঁর সমসাময়িক প্রতিভার ব্যাপকতার কথা যখন বিচার করি তখন স্বীকার করতেই হবে যে কাব্যে, নাটকে, গদ্যে, উপন্যাসে, সঙ্গীতে, চিত্রে, শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায়, কর্ম-চিন্তায়, জাতিগঠনে, বিশ্বমানবের একসাধনে কোন একজন মানুষ কোন দেশের সাহিত্যে বা জীবনে এতখানি স্থান অধিকার করেন নি। এর প্রতিক্ষেপে তাঁর চাইতে অধিকতর কতী ব্যক্তির সন্ধান মিলতে পারে কিংবা সামগ্রিক বিচারে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কৃতিত্ব পৃথিবীর যে কোন প্রতিভাকে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী করেছে। প্রতিভার বহুমুখতার বিচার করলে প্রাচীনযুগে সিওনার্দো দা ভিকি এবং অপেক্ষাকৃত আধুনিক যুগে গার্সি লাভা আর কারও সঙ্গে তাঁর তুলনা চলেনা। এই কারণে নিঃসন্দেহে বলা চলে যে পূর্বোক্ত উক্তি—তোমার প্রতি চাহিয়া আমাদের বিষময়ের অন্ত নাই—এর মধ্যে এতটুকু অসত্য নেই।

এখানে বলে রাখা ভাল যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশেষ করে আমাদের চোখে অর্থাৎ বাঙ্গালী এবং ভারতবাসীর চোখেই বিষময়ের বস্তু। অপর কি চোখে দেখে তাতে আমাদের বিশেষ কিছু এসে যায় না। বাস্তবিক পক্ষে ইংরেজী, ফরাসী, জার্মান বা রুশ সাহিত্য কোন একজন ব্যক্তির কাছে এতখানি গভীর নয়। বিশেষ করে ইংরেজী সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে বাদের পরিচয় আছে তারা একথা নিশ্চয় লক্ষ্য করে থাকবেন যে ষোড়শ শতাব্দী থেকে শুরু করে

দিশ শতাব্দীর প্রথম, দ্বিতীয় দশক পর্যন্ত ইংরেজী কাব্যে যা কিছু সৃষ্টি হয়েছে রবীন্দ্রনাথ একক চেষ্টায় বাংলা সাহিত্যের আসরে প্রায় তার সমস্তই পরিবেশন করেছেন। ভাবলে বিস্মিত হতে হয় যে তার শতাব্দীর পথ তিনি এক জীবনে অতিক্রম করেছেন। ইংরেজী সাহিত্যের প্রতি তাঁর ঋণ অবশ্য—ঋণী, কিন্তু তাতে তাঁর ধোরন কিছুমাত্র লাঘব হয় না। তা ছাড়া কেবল মাত্র বিহ্বলিত কিম্বা বৈচিত্র্যের পরিমাপে নয়, উৎকর্ষের দিক থেকেও তাঁর সাহিত্য-কীর্তি বিস্ময়ের উদ্বেক করে।

কোন প্রতিভার বিচারকালে দেশের এবং জাতির ইতিহাসের পরিবেশকে তাকে দেখা প্রয়োজন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্য কীর্তি সম্পর্কে স্পষ্ট ধারণা করতে হলে সবপ্রথমে ভাবতে হবে তিনি যখন বাংলা সাহিত্যের অঙ্গনে প্রবেশ করেন তখন আমাদের সাহিত্যকে তিনি কি অবস্থায় পেয়েছিলেন আর তিনি যখন বিদায় নিলেন তখন সেই সাহিত্যকে তিনি কোন স্থরে এনে পৌঁছিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন। এ কথা বোঝার জন্য একলেই স্বীকার করবো যে সাহিত্য যেখানে অপরিণত সেখানে প্রতিভাকে প্রয়োজন বশে দশভুজা হতে হয়। উন্নতদেশ সমূহে সাহিত্যিক প্রতিভা অপেক্ষাকৃত দায়মুক্ত। কবিকে শুধু কাব্য রচনা করলেই চলে। আমাদের কবি দায়মুক্ত নন। তাকে সারাক্ষণ মনে রাখতে হয়েছে, আমাদের সাহিত্য অপরিপুষ্ট, তাকে গড়ে তুলতে হবে। এমন যে মধুসূদন যিনি ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে কোনকালে দায়িত্বভারের পরিচয় দেননি, নিজের জীবন নিয়ে তিনিমিনি খেলেছেন তিনিও সাহিত্যিক দায়িত্ব যেচে খাড়ে নিয়েছিলেন। বেলগাতিয়া নাম্নিলায়ে বাংলা নাটকের অভিনয় দেখে নিরাশ হয়ে বন্ধুকে বলেছিলেন, ও, এই তোমাদের নাটকের নমুনা! রোসো, আমি লিখে দিচ্ছি—লিখলেন নাটক, লিখলেন প্রহসন—ঠিক এ জাতীয় তিনিই আমাদের সাহিত্যে আদৌ ছিল না। যনোটি ইয়োরাপীয় কাব্যের গৌরবের বস্ত্র, বাংলা সাহিত্যে যনোটির সৃষ্টি করলেন। গতানুগতিক চন্দ্রের নিগড় থেকে বাংলা কাব্যকে অমিত্রাক্ষরে মুক্তি দিলেন—বাংলা কাব্য সাবালক হল। মধুসূদনের মায় বন্ধিমেরও ছিল নব নব স্বজনী প্রতিভা। এঁদের দুজনের হাতেই বাংলা সাহিত্য নব যুগের দীক্ষা গ্রহণ করেছে। আমাদের গ্রাম প্রান্তের ছোট নদীকূলে সেই প্রথম আমরা পশ্চিম যমুন্দের লোনা জলের স্নান পেলাম। বাংলা সাহিত্যের গ্রাম্যরূপ দূর হয়ে নগরিক মূর্তি দেখা দিল। তারপরে এসেছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। সেই নদীকে কত জনপদ কত নগর পার করে দিয়ে তিনি পৌঁছে দিয়েছেন সাগর-সমুদ্রে। বিশ্বেসাহিত্যের স্তরের মাঝে বাংলা সাহিত্যের স্থান মিলিয়ে দিয়েছেন। “বিশ্বসাধে যোগে যোগ্য বিহারো, সেইখানে যোগ তোমার সাথে আসারো” মনে হয় এই কথা যেন সাহিত্যের অধিষ্ঠাত্রী দেবীকে উদ্দেশ্য করেই তিনি বলেছিলেন। বললে অত্যুক্তি হবে না যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের মধ্যে আমরা সাহিত্যের বিশ্বরূপ দর্শন করছি। আমাদের ভাষায় এবং চিন্তায় তিনি যে শক্তি এবং বলিষ্ঠতা এনে দিয়েছেন তাঁর সাহায্যে আমরা শুধু যে অপভ্রংশের সাহিত্যের মূল রাগ-রাগিণীগুলিরই সন্ধান পেয়েছি এমন নয়, তাঁদের আধুনিকতম অতি সুক্ষ্ম স্তরবিস্তারও আমাদের আধারের মধ্যে এসেছে। বিশ্ব সাহিত্যের মূল স্রষ্টা রবীন্দ্রনাথ ধরিয়ে দিয়েছেন বলেই এটি সম্ভব হতে পেরেছে। তাঁর প্রতি আমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা এই কারণেই সব চাইতে বেশী। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সর্বাশ্রেষ্ঠ কীর্তি আমরা মনে এই যে—আমাদের সাহিত্য-গৌরব এখন আর কেবলমাত্র

রবীন্দ্র-কীর্তি-নির্ভর নয়। তিনি আমাদের সাহিত্যে দিগন্তকে অস্বহীন বিস্তার দান করেছেন। পথের বাধা সমস্তই অপসারিত হয়েছে, এখন অগ্রগতিতে কোন বাধা নেই। রবীন্দ্র পরবর্তী বাংলা কাব্যে, গল্পে, উপন্যাসে নব নব অভিনয় সেই শক্তিকেই প্রমাণিত করেছে। শিবের জীবন যতক্ষণ বাঁধা ছিলেন পক্ষা ততক্ষণ পূণ্যসলিলা ছিলেন না। জটা মুক্ত হয়ে মর্ত্তভূমিতে যখন এলেন তখনই তিনি পূণ্যসলিলা হলেন। প্রতিভার বেলায়ও তাই। প্রতিভা একের মধ্যে আবদ্ধ থাকলে সাহিত্য কোন কালে সমৃদ্ধ হতে পারে না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কৃতিত্ব—তিনি শুধু সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি করেন নি। সাহিত্যিক সৃষ্টি করেছেন।

সাহিত্য রীতি যুগে যুগে বদলে যায়। রবীন্দ্ররীতি বদলাবে, বদলাচ্ছেও। এটি স্বাভাবিক চ্যাপ, স্পেন্সার এমন কি সেক্সপীয়র এরও রচনা রীতি আজকে কেউ অনুবর্তন করে না। কিন্তু তাঁদের শক্তির ক্রিয়া আজও চলছে এবং চলতে থাকবে। সর্বদেবে সর্বকালে সাহিত্যিক পথান্ধা সকলেই শক্তিসাধক। এঁরা নিজ নিজ ভাষায় দেহে এবং প্রাণে প্ৰভূত শক্তির সঞ্চয় করেছেন। কিন্তু মনে রাখা প্রয়োজন যে শক্তি বজ্রকপিণী, কালান্তরের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে তার রূপান্তর ঘটে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনা রীতি যদি আবহমান কাল অব্যাহত থাকে তবে বুঝতে হবে কালের গতি স্তব্ধ হয়েছে কিম্বা তিনি যে শক্তি সঞ্চয়িত করেছিলেন আমাদের মধ্যে তাঁর ক্রিয়া ঠিকমত চলছেন। অর্থাৎ কিনা রবীন্দ্রনাথ ব্যর্থ হয়েছেন।

আমাদের সাহিত্যে এবং ইংরেজী সাহিত্যে একটি বিরূপ পার্থক্য আছে। ইংরেজী সাহিত্যে বহুসাধকের সাহায্যে সিদ্ধিলাভ করেছে। ছোট বড় মাঝারি অগণিত লেখক সেখানে হাত মিলিয়েছেন। বাংলা সাহিত্যে গড়ে উঠেছে মুষ্টিমের প্রতিভাবানের প্রচেষ্টায়। শিক্ষা বিস্তারের ফলে এই যবে আমাদের সাহিত্যের প্রাঙ্গণে ভীড় জমেছে। আগে যা হয়েছে একের প্রতিভায় এখন তা হবে বহুর অধাবসায়। প্রাকৃতিক নিয়মেই প্রাচীন কালের অতিকায় জীব পৃথিবী থেকে লোপ পেয়েছে। অতিকায় প্রতিভাও লোপ পেতে বাধ্য। কালের বর্মে একদা যা একের মধ্যে গম্বিবিষ্ট ছিল এখন তা বহুর মধ্যে পরিব্যপ্ত হবে। এরই নাম সভ্যতার অগ্রগতি। বাস বাসীকি, হোমার, ভার্জিল, কালিদাস, দাশে, শেক্সপীয়র, গায়টে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ পৃথিবীতে আর হবে না। ইয়োরাপে অতিকায় প্রতিভার দিন আগেই চলে গিয়েছে; তার কারণ ও দেশের জনশিক্ষার বিস্তার বহুপূর্বেই হয়েছে। ওদের সাহিত্যও অনেক আগেই প্রাপ্ত বয়স্কের গৌরব লাভ করেছে। আমাদের সাহিত্যে এটি বাকী ছিল, সেই জন্যই রবীন্দ্রনাথের আবির্ভাব। বন্ধন, রবীন্দ্রনাথ একা শুধু একশ নন, এক অক্ষোভিনী। একদিকে একা শ্রীকৃষ্ণ অন্যদিকে এক অক্ষোভিনী—এটি এ যুগের কথা নয়। আজকের দিনে কৃষ্ণের চাইতে অক্ষোভিনী শ্রেয়। একের মধ্যে প্রতিভার অতি-সঞ্চার চাইনা, বহুর মধ্যে প্রতিভার সম্প্রসারণ চাই। শতবর্ষ পূর্বে আমাদের দেশে যে বিস্ময়কর প্রতিভার জন্ম হয়েছিল আজকের জয়ন্তী উৎসবে তার পুনরাবর্তন আমরা কামনা করি। কারণ তাহলে প্রমাণিত হবে যে আমাদের দৈন্যদশা এখনও বোচেনি। আজ রবীন্দ্র প্রতিভার মুক্তি দিবস। স্মরণ রাখা কর্তব্য যে নিজেকে অনাবশ্যক করে দিয়ে তবে প্রতিভার মুক্তি হয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ আমাদের সাহিত্যকে সেই স্তরে তুলে দিয়ে গিয়েছেন যেখানে সে আপন পথ আপনি করে নিতে পারবে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সমাজচিন্তার তাৎপর্য

সৌমিত্রশঙ্কর দাশগুপ্ত



রবীন্দ্রনাথ কবি, এই তাঁর সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ পরিচয়। তাঁর কবিতাই তাঁকে অমরত্বের অধিকারী করবে। তাঁর সৃষ্টির শ্রেষ্ঠ উৎকর্ষ। কবিতায় ও গানে, যা তাঁকে চিরসমন্বীত করে রাখবে। কিন্তু সাহিত্য ও শিল্পের সর্ববিধ ক্ষেত্রেই তাঁর কীর্তি ও সিদ্ধি বিস্ময়প্রবণ। শুধু কাব্য নয়, সমগ্র রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যই বহুদূর পরে আমাদের আলোচনা ও উপভোগের সীমাহীন হয়ে থাকবে।

কিন্তু আত্মগত ও মনোনিষ্ঠ এই লোকোত্তর পুণ্য শুধু নিঃসঙ্গ-নিভূতের রসসুপ্তির সাধনায় নিজেস্বত্ব নিমগ্ন রাধেননি; তাঁর স্বক্ষেত্রে অতিক্রম করে বারবার তিনি প্রাত্যহিক পৃথিবীর লোকযাত্রা ও কর্মধারার সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়েছেন—বহির্বিবেশের ঘটনা-প্রবাহেও নিরন্তর আন্দোলিত হয়েছে কবিত্ত্ব। প্রাত্যহিক মানুষ ও পৃথিবীর সমস্যা, তাঁর সম্মুখভূতিসম্পন্ন কবিত্ত্বকে পীড়িত করবে তা হয়ত স্বাভাবিক ছিল; কিন্তু পীড়িত হয়ে নীরব থাকবেন, তেমন মানসিকতা তাঁর ছিল না। জীবনের নানা কঠিন সমস্যার মুখোমুখি এসে সমস্যা সমাধানের উপায় নিয়েও তিনি ভাবিত হয়েছেন—ফলে নতুন পথের সন্ধান ও নতুন পরীক্ষার প্রয়োজনের কথা তাঁর মনে এসেছে। আর তাঁর বিনামূলি পতিভার আলোকস্পর্শে সমস্যা ও সমাধান, দুটোই যেন নতুন হয়ে দেখা দিয়েছে। শুধু তাই নয়, পরীক্ষা ও পরিকল্পনার উভয়ক্ষেত্রেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছিলেন সার্থক ও সক্রিয় এবং নিঃসন্দেহে অদ্বিতীয় ও বিশিষ্ট। এখানে একই ব্যক্তিতে ভাবক ও কর্মীর, চিন্তানায়ক ও পথিকৃতির অপূর্ণ সমাবেশ ঘটেছে। এখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ শুধু কবি বা শিল্পী নন, তিনি কবি অপেক্ষাও বেশি—তার অতিরিক্ত আরও কিছু।

বিশুদ্ধ সাহিত্যের বাইরে যে পৃথিবী, সেখানে রবীন্দ্রমানুষের ব্যাপ্তি বিস্ময়কর, কর্মপ্রেরণার অতিব্যক্তিও অপূর্ণ। এই পৃথিবী সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিন্তন ও মননকে সংক্ষেপে আমরা 'রবীন্দ্রসমাজচিন্তা' নামে অভিহিত করতে পারি; সমাজবিজ্ঞানের বহুতর বিভাগকে কেন্দ্র করে যা রূপায়িত হয়েছে। সমাজ-বিজ্ঞানের যে যে বিভাগ রবীন্দ্রপ্রতিভার স্পর্শের উজ্জ্বল, তার মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল অর্থনীতি ও রাজনীতি, ইতিহাস ও দর্শন, ধর্মতত্ত্ব ও শিক্ষাতত্ত্ব। এই বিভিন্ন বিভাগের যে-কোনো একটির বিচার ও বিস্তারিত আলোচনার অপেক্ষা রাখে। এই স্বল্প-পরিমিত প্রবন্ধে যে চেষ্টা না করে, রবীন্দ্র-সামাজিকচিন্তার কয়েকটি মূলসূত্র অনুধাবনের চেষ্টা করা যেতে পারে। সে-প্রয়াসেরও বিশেষ পার্থক্য আছে, কেননা প্রতি তত্ত্ব বা দর্শন শেষ পর্যন্ত কয়েকটি মূলসূত্র বা নীতি দ্বারা প্রভাবিত, যা সে তত্ত্বের ভিত্তিভূমি বা বৈশিষ্ট্যের দোতক। কাজেই রবীন্দ্র-সমাজদর্শনের মূলসূত্র অনুধাবনে যদি আমরা সফল হই, তবেই তার তাৎপর্য বুঝতে আমরা সক্ষম হব।

সমাজদর্শন সম্পর্কে এ-কথা আমাদের মনে রাখতে হবে যে, সমাজচিন্তাসম্প্রদেয় দেশ-কালের ঘটনার দ্বারা প্ৰভাবিত। কিন্তু লক্ষ্য করলে দেখব রাষ্ট্রতত্ত্বেই কি শিক্ষাদর্শনেই কি, রবীন্দ্রনাথ জীবনের প্রারম্ভে থেকেই একটা উদার কল্যাণপ্রত্যয়ে সজ্জিত হয়ে চেয়েছেন। এখানে তাঁর অপর বিশ্ণুসের ভিত্তিভূমি মনোতন ভারতবর্ষ বা আধ্যাত্মিকতা, যেখানে আরার অধৈর্যপতায় স্বভাবতই দেশকালের সকল ক্ষুদ্র সীমাকে বারবার অতিক্রম করে গেছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথকে আমরা প্রাচ্যভূমিতে আত্মজাতিকতা নব্বের, প্রথম না হলেও, প্রধান উদ্গাতা বলে জানি। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ক্ষেত্রে আত্মজাতিকতাবোধ বা বিশ্ণুবোধের পতন, বলা যেতে পারে, অনেকখানি অনুভূতি বা ধ্যানমগ্ন। রাষ্ট্রীয় সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে যে-সুপে সংঘাত ও বিরোধই একমাত্র সত্য ছিল, মন্দমত রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ যেকালে স্বভাবে বা আচরণে আত্মজাতিকতার সত্য দাবিকে নিরন্তর উপেক্ষাই করেছে, সে-সুপে রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপলব্ধিতে এ-সত্য পরা পড়েছিল যে, সামাজিক সহযোগিতা ছাড়া মানবমুক্তির অন্য পথ নাই এবং এ সহযোগিতা ছাড়া মনুষ্যের উদ্ধাবনও সত্য হবে না। আধুনিককালে শক্তিমন্ডল রাষ্ট্রগুলির আত্মজাতিকতামুখী প্রবণতা অনেকখানি জাতিবৈর ও জাতি-সংঘর্ষের ভয়াবহ পরিণাম-সম্ভাবনাকে কেন্দ্র করে গড়ে উঠেছে।

দ্বিতীয়তঃ, সমাজচিন্তার ক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্ন শাস্ত্রকে খণ্ডিত করে দেখার যে-নীতি প্রচলিত, সে-ভাবে রবীন্দ্রসমাজচিন্তাকে বিভিন্ন প্রকোষ্ঠে ভাগ করে দেখানো সম্ভব ও সম্ভব নয়। আধুনিক কালে অবশ্য সমাজচিন্তার ক্ষেত্রে জীবনকে সমগ্রভাবে বিচার করার বা বুঝার একটা প্রবণতাও লক্ষ্যগোচর; কিন্তু এখানে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে দেখার প্রবণতাত্তেই জীবনবিজ্ঞানসার আরম্ভ বলে শেষ পর্যন্ত সমগ্রয়ের কোনো স্থির ভিত্তিভূমি খুঁজে পাওয়া শক্ত হয়ে পড়ে। খণ্ডিত সত্যের ভুবনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কোনোদিন বাঁচতে চান নি—তাই দ্বন্দ্বজর্জর, শতধাবিত্ত্ব দেশ-কালে বাস করেও, রবীন্দ্রনাথ শেষ পর্যন্ত অথও একাবোধ ও প্রদীপ্ত মানসিকতার অধিকারী ছিলেন; যার ফলে সামাজিক নানা সমস্যাকে জীবনের বৃহত্তর সমস্যা থেকে পৃথক করে তিনি দেখেন নি, সমগ্র জীবনের অঙ্গ রূপেই দেখেছেন। এই অথও একাবোধের অধিকারী ছিলেন বলেই তাঁর সমাজচিন্তা একাধারে স্বাদেশিক ও বিশ্বজনীন, ভারতীয় ও বিদেশী। যে-এক্যানুভূতি, চেতনা ও প্রত্যয় রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্যভাবনা সৃষ্টিতে সর্বত্র প্রবাহিত, আমাদের ভুললে চলবে না যে তাঁর সমাজচিন্তাত্তেও তা ওতপ্রোত। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সমাজচিন্তাকে তাঁর জীবন সাহিত্য থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে দেখা অসম্ভব।

তৃতীয়তঃ রবীন্দ্রসৃষ্টি বা জীবনকে নানা পর্বে বা অবস্থায়

ভাগ করা অসম্ভব বা প্রয়োজন হলেও, তিনি আশিষের প্রবর্তনায় স্তম্ভিত বলেই তাঁর সৃষ্টি বা চিত্রার বারাবাহিকতা বা অপ্রতীকৈ যোগ অবিকল্পিত রূপে নতুন। তাঁর বিশেষ প্রকাশকে বিচ্ছিন্ন বা খাপছাড়া মনে করলে তাঁর প্রতি মস্ত অবিচার করা হবে। রবীন্দ্রসৃষ্টির এই বারাবাহিক প্রবণ নব নব উত্তরণ অবশ্যই লক্ষ্য-খোঁচের কিস্তি প্রতি ক্ষেত্রেই সঙ্গতিবিশালেন দ্বিতর দিয়ে এবং মৌল্যবিশ্বাসকে ক্রমাগত করে, তা নব নব সমন্বয়ে উন্নীত হয়েছে। কাজেই রবীন্দ্রসৃষ্টি প্রতিদিন পুনরাবৃত্তি মাত্র নয়, নব নব বিকাশে তা প্রতিশাল ও সমামিত।

আমাদের উপন্যাসে পাঠ্যপাঠ্যগুলির সমর্থনে রবীন্দ্রচরিত্র থেকে কয়েকটি যথোক্ত উদ্ধৃতি উপস্থাপন করা যেতে পারে :

“নিজেই নিজেই বাইরে উৎসর্গ করে দিয়ে তবে আমরা আপনাকে পাই।”

“সর্বমানবের তাগতির ক্ষেত্রে আমরা জনৈকি। বুঝা যিনি, সৃষ্টির মধ্যে আপনাকে উৎসর্গ করে তাঁর আনন্দ.....এ যেমন অব্যবহালেকের কথা, তেমনি চিত্তলোক ও মানুষ মহা-মানবের তাগতির লোকে জন্মানাও করেছে ও গুরুত্ব করেছে, এই কথা উপলব্ধি করতে হবে।”

“আমাদের পূর্বপুরুষের সেই নিয়ত-জাগ্রত মস্তনের ভাবনিকে ছদ্মের মধ্যে পানবস্ত্ররূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়া সমাজের সমস্ত তাহাকে প্রয়োগ করি, তবেই বিপুল হিন্দুসভ্যতাকে পুনর্বার প্রাপ্ত হইব।.....স্বার্থের আদর্শকেই মানবসমাজের কেন্দ্রস্থলে না স্থাপন করিয়া লুপ্তের মধ্যে মানবসমাজকে নিরীক্ষণ করা ইচ্ছাই হিন্দুত্ব।”

“যাহা সকলের চেয়ে শ্রেষ্ঠ, যাহা সকলের চেয়ে পূর্ণ, যাহা চরম সত্য, তাহা সকলকে নষ্টিয়া।.....

ভারতবর্ষেও যে-ইতিহাস পাঠিত হইয়া উঠিতেছে—এই ইতিহাসের শেষ তাৎপর্য এ নয় যে, এদেশে হিন্দুই বড়ো হইবে বা আর কেহ বড়ো হইবে। ভারতবর্ষে মানবের ইতিহাস একটি বিশেষ সাধক তাঁর মূর্তি পরিপ্রায় করিবে, পরিপূর্ণতাকে একটি অপূর্ণ আকার দান করিয়া তাহাকে সমস্ত মানবের প্রচণ্ডযোগ্য সামগ্রী করিয়া তুলিবে, ইহা অপেক্ষা কোনো ক্ষুদ্র অভিপ্রায় ভারতবর্ষের ইতিহাসে নাই। এই পরিপূর্ণতার প্রতিমা পঠনে হিন্দু মুসলমান বা ইহুদী যদি নিজের বর্তমানের বিশেষ আকারনিকে একেবারে বিলুপ্ত করিয়া দেয়, তাহা হইতে প্রাজ্ঞাতিক অভিমানেই অপমৃত্যু ঘটিতে পারে, কিন্তু সত্যের বা মঙ্গলের অপচয় হয় না।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিত্রাবারা অনুধাবন করলে যদিও আমরা কয়েকটি হাবী ভাবনা বা বিশ্বাসের সমর্থন পাই, তবু তাঁর সমাজ-চিত্রকে কোনো বিশেষ অভিপ্রায় চিত্রিত করা প্রায় অসম্ভব। তাঁর প্রসঙ্গে অনেক সময়ে ‘লিবারাল’ বা ‘হিউমানিটি’ বিশেষণ ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে। প্রত্যাচ্যের উদারনৈতিক ভাবনা ও মানবতাবাদের সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্র-সমাজচিত্রের সাদৃশ্য থাকলেও রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবনাদর্শ ও চিন্তা আদর্শ ব্যাপক ও গভীর।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সমস্ত চিত্রাবারাকে ব্যাপ্ত করে আছে যে অর্থ ও একাত্মভাবনা তাঁর লক্ষ্য সেই দুর্ভূত সমন্বয়, যেখানে ব্যক্তি তাঁর স্বাতন্ত্র্য চক্ষু রেখেও বিশ্বজীবনের সঙ্গে যোগে যুক্ত; একটা

হার্মনিতর বা সুষমাবাদের দিকে তাঁর চিত্রার নির্দেশ যেখানে পৌঁছতে চলে অনেক কিছু আধুনিক বিলাস বা প্রয়োজনবোধকে আমাদের সংযত বা পরিহার করতে হবে। উপকরণের ক্ষেত্রে, অভাববোধের ক্ষেত্রে, ভৌগোলিক ক্ষেত্রে সর্বত্রই বহুলতাকে করি স্বার্থহীন ভাষায় নির্দেশ করেছেন; মানুষের ধন বা সম্পদ-সৃষ্টির ক্ষেত্রেও সৌম্যনির্দেশের প্রয়োজন অনুভব করেছেন। এই উপকরণ-বিরলতায় ও সংযমে অভ্যাস হওয়া, অসুখা অনেকের কাছে যা কচ্ছসাধনা বলে উপহসিত হতে পারে, রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতে, মানুষের সৃষ্টি-উদ্যমকে তা সজাগ ও সক্রিয় রাখে। শিক্ষার উপকরণ-বিরলতার সমর্থনে তিনি বলেছেন : “শরীর-মনের শক্তি যতটা চর্চা সেখানেই ভালো করে সম্ভব সেখানে বাইরের সহায়তা অনতিশয়।”^১ অন্যত্র তিনি বলেছেন : “উদার ভরাউ-দরের উপরে অনেকটা নির্ভর করে।”^২ কিন্তু সেখানেই যথার্থ শক্তির একটি চেষ্টা দেখতে পাই সেখানেই দেখা যায়, যেটা কেবলমাত্র নিকা দিয়ে হাটো কেনবার নয়—দায়িত্বের জমিতেই সে সোনার ফল ফলার। “এখানকার শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় যে অক্লান্ত উদ্যম, গাফস, বুদ্ধিশক্তি, যে আত্মসংযম দেখান, তাঁর অতি অল্প পরিমাণ থাকলেও কৃত্য হতুম। আন্তরিক শক্তি ও অকৃত্রিম উৎসাহ যত কম থাকে নিকা খুঁজতে হয় ততই বেশি করে।”^৩

বর্তমান সভ্যতার বিজ্ঞানের নিকট মূল্যকে স্বীকার করেও, এই বিজ্ঞান-নির্ভর সভ্যতার খতি-ব্যয়িকতা বা যন্ত্র-সর্বস্বতার বিপদ সম্বন্ধেও রবীন্দ্রনাথ বারবার আমাদের অবহিত করেছেন, এমন-কি এ-কারণে একটি যন্ত্র-বিশুদ্ধতার স্তর-ও রবীন্দ্র-চিত্রা-ধারায় লক্ষণীয়। যে- বিজ্ঞান জড়বিশ্বের অশুভ অগাচার থেকে, ক্ষুধা-তৃষ্ণা-লোপ-দৈন্য-রূপ মৃত্যু থেকে মানুষকে রক্ষার সজীবন মন্ত্র নিয়ে এসেছে, সে-বিজ্ঞানই মানুষকে আরও প্রচণ্ড ও বীভৎস মৃত্যুর দিকে ঠেলে দিচ্ছে—সে মানুষের আত্মকেও গ্রাস করতে চলেছে। বিজ্ঞানের এই ভয়াবহ সম্ভাবনার ফলে আজকের দিনে বৃহৎ শক্তিপুঞ্জ অস্তিত্ব একটি ক্ষেত্রে সংযমের বাস্তব প্রয়োজনীয়তা বোধ করছে—সে হল মারনাথ ব্যবহারের ক্ষেত্রে; অথচ স্বভাবে বা অন্তরে সংযমবোধ না থাকলে তাঁর আপন অন্তরই মানুষকে নাশ করবে। কিন্তু বিজ্ঞানের কল্যাণে মানুষে মানুষে, জাতিতে জাতিতে দূরত্বের ব্যবধান আজ যুচে গেছে, একত্র হবার বাহ্যশক্তিই হ্রত বৃদ্ধি ঘটছে, কিন্তু কোথায় সে করণ ও অন্তরশক্তি যা মানুষের সভ্য যোগ সম্ভব করবে?

বস্তু-সর্বস্বতা, বিষয়-সর্বস্বতা, যন্ত্র-সর্বস্বতা—এ-সব কিছুকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ এক বাক্যে নির্দেশ করেছেন, তাঁর কারণ এতে মানুষের স্বভাব ক্ষুণ্ণ হয়, আর ফলে তাঁর জীবন থেকে স্তম্ভের ঘটে নির্বাসন রবীন্দ্রনাথের এ-জাতীয় ভাবধারার সঙ্গে অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই হ্রত তথাকথিত আধুনিক চিত্রাবারার সম্মতি খুঁজে পাওয়া যাবে না, অনেক সমালোচক তাঁকে বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রে ‘আধুনিক’ রূপে আখ্যাতও করতে পারেন, এমন-কি যা সর্বোপেক্ষা দুঃখকর, রবীন্দ্র আদর্শের দাবক ও বাধ্যদের ক্ষেত্রেও প্রাত্যহিক জীবনে এই বিশিষ্ট জীবনাদর্শকে ক্রমাগত চলার দৃষ্টান্তের অভাব নেই। রবীন্দ্র-উত্তরাধিকার প্রসঙ্গে এ-জীবনাদর্শের তাৎপর্য পরম মূল্যবান, যা বিস্মৃত হওয়া অর্থ সে-উত্তরাধিকারের বিরাট

১ বিশ্বভারতী, ১৪ সংখ্যক রচনা, পৃষ্ঠা ১১৬

২ “... ১৫ ... পৃষ্ঠা ১২৩-২৪

৩ রবীন্দ্র রচনাবলী, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, আত্মশক্তি, পৃষ্ঠা ৫২৫

৪ রবীন্দ্রচরিত্রাবলী, দ্বাদশ খণ্ড, “সমাজ”, পৃষ্ঠা ২৬২-৬৩

৫ শিক্ষা, পৃষ্ঠা ৩৩১

৬ রবীন্দ্রচরিত্রাবলী, বিশ খণ্ড, “রাশিয়ার চিত্র” পৃষ্ঠা ২৮৩

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রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভারতচিন্তা

ডঃ অরবিন্দ পোদ্দার

বড়র চম্বিশশেক আগে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর বিপ্লবাত 'সত্যের আত্মা' প্রবন্ধে লিখেছিলেন, 'সমস্ত বিশ্বের যোগযুক্ত ভারতের বিরূপিত রূপ চোখে না পড়তে আমাদের কর্মে ও চিন্তায় ভারতের যে-পরিচয় আমরা নিতে পবৃত্ত হয়েছি, সে অতি ছোটো, তাঁর দীপ্তি নেই; সে আমাদের ব্যবসায়-বুদ্ধিকেই প্রধান করে তুলেছে। এই বুদ্ধি কখনো কোনো বড়ো জিনিসকে সৃষ্টি করেনি।' সেদিন যেমন কবির এই বাণী তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ছিল, তেমনি রবীন্দ্রজন্ম-শতবার্ষিকীর উৎসবমুখর ভারতের নিকটও তা অধিকতর গুরুত্ব ও সত্যতায় প্রকটিত। সেদিনকার ভারত ছিল জাতীয় সংগ্রামের আত্মস্থিত চেতনায় উজ্জ্বলিত; স্তব্ধতা, যে কর্ম তার আওত উদ্দেশ্যের পক্ষে কার্যকর তার প্রতিই তার দৃষ্টি ছিল নিবদ্ধ। সেই উপস্থিত পরিস্থিতির উন্মাদনা জয় করে অন্য কোনো মহত্তর বা বৃহত্তর আদর্শের প্রতি দৃষ্টি ক্ষেপণ করা সম্ভবতঃ সেদিনকার ভারতের রাজনৈতিক নেতৃবৃন্দের পক্ষে সম্ভব হয়নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাতে আন্তরিক ক্ষোভ অনুভব করেছিলেন, এবং সেজন্যই তাঁর পূর্বোক্ত অভিযোগ।

কবির স্বদূরবিস্তারী বিশ্ববোধে একথা উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছিল যে, ভারতবর্ষ এক অবিচ্ছেদ্য এককের বন্ধনে জগতের অন্যান্য জাতি ও দেশের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত হয়ে পড়েছে; মানবিক বিশ্বের এক অংশ ও বিধান ভারতবর্ষকে এক অতি-নিকট সম্পর্কে আবদ্ধ করেছে। সেজন্য, জাতীয় আকাশে ভারতের যে উদ্বোধন তাকে সমগ্র পৃথিবীর উদ্বোধনের অঙ্গরূপে গ্রহণ করতে হবে। এই সত্য যদি আমাদের বোধে ধরা না দেয় তাহলে বৃহৎ জগত পূর্বাপর আমাদের চিন্তায় অনুপস্থিত থেকে যাবে; আর সেটা কারও পক্ষেই মঙ্গলজনক হবে না,—জগতের পক্ষে তো নয়ই, ভারতের নিজের স্বার্থের পক্ষেও না। অন্য কথায়, আমাদের চিন্তা ও কর্মের পরিধিতে শুধু ভারতবর্ষ উপস্থিত থাকলে আর চলছে না, চিন্তায় কর্মে উদ্দেশ্যের বিশালতায় আমাদের এবার বিশ্ববাসী হতে হবে।

সেদিনকার জাতীয় সংগ্রামের উন্মত্ততা ও কোলাহলের মধ্যে থেকে কিভাবে তিনি তার অবস্থিত উপদ্রব থেকে মুক্ত ছিলেন, এবং কিভাবেই বা তিনি এমন স্তমহান বিশ্বাসে স্থিত হতে পেরেছিলেন, তা অনেক সময় আমাদের বিস্মিত করে। আমরা আমাদের উপস্থিত দাবির সংকীর্ণতায় আবদ্ধ থেকে হতবাক হয়ে ভাবি, এ কি করে সম্ভব হলো? কিন্তু তার কারণ নির্দেশ করা কঠিন নয়। অবশ্যই কবি উপনিষদের ঋষি-উদ্গাত বাণীতে বিশ্বগত হওয়ার প্রেরণা অনুভব করেছিলেন, সেই

বাণীতেই ছিল জাগতিক ও মানবিক এককের বাণী। 'তাঁরা ডা, সমরনযোধ্যা যে, রবীন্দ্রনাথের পূর্বসূরী রামমোহন রায় আধুনিক ভারতের প্রথম বিশ্বপথিক; তাঁর কণ্ঠ থেকেই প্রথম উচ্চারিত হয়েছিল এই সত্য—পশ্চিমের জাতিগুলো সম্পূর্ণ স্বাধীন না হওয়া পর্যন্ত ভারতের পক্ষেও স্বাধীনতা অর্জন করা সম্ভব হবে না। রামমোহনের চিন্তা ভারতের ভৌগোলিক সীমানা অতিক্রম করে বিশ্বসীমায় উপনীত হয়েছিল। তাঁর চিন্তার এই বিশালতায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের স্বাভাবিক উত্তরাধিকার।

কিন্তু, বিশেষ যে ঘটনাটি কবিকে ই বলিষ্ঠ প্রত্যয়ে আগ্রহী হতে সাহায্য করেছিল তা হল প্রথম বিশ্বযুদ্ধ। এই যুদ্ধ বাইরের দিক থেকে ক্ষমতাদৃষ্ট রাষ্ট্রসমূহকে যেমন হত্যার 'তাণ্ডবে ডেকে এনেছিল, তেমনি প্রাণের দাবিতে একে বিশ্ববাসী প্রতিরোধ করার 'তাপিদও অনুভূত হয়েছিল বিভিন্ন দেশের মানুষের চিত্তে। দেশবিদেশের অসহায় মানুষ তখন হঠাৎ চমকিত হয়ে আবিষ্কার করল, তাদের একের ভাণ্ডা অপরের ভোগের সঙ্গে এক অজ্ঞাত কিন্তু স্বদূর সম্পর্কে বাঁধা; স্তব্ধতা একে প্রতিরোধও করতে হবে অশুভভাবে। প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধের অব্যবহিত পরবর্তীকালে রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই বিশ্ববোধের উদ্বোধনকে দৃঢ়তর করেছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। বিশ্বমানুষের একে আত্মশীল বিভিন্ন দেশের শিল্পী-বিজ্ঞানী-দার্শনিকের স্বাক্ষরিত Declaration of Independence of the spirit এই মূল্যবান দলিলের যে একটি কপি রবীন্দ্রনাথকে পাঠিয়েছিলেন, তার এক স্থানে অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই কথা কয়টি দেখতে পাচ্ছি: "Of course we shall not dissociate ourselves from the interests of humanity. We shall work for it, but for it as a whole. We do not recognise nations. We recognise the people—one and universal the people who suffer, who struggle, who fall and rise again, and who ever march forward on the rough road, drenched with their sweat and their blood,—the people comprising all men, all equally our brothers." (অর্থ, মানবজাতির স্বার্থ থেকে আমরা নিজেদের বিচ্ছিন্ন করে নেব না। তার জন্যেও আমরা সংগ্রাম করব, কিন্তু করব অশুভভাবে। কোন জাতিকেই আমরা স্বীকার করি না, আমরা স্বীকার করি এক ও বিশ্বজনীন জনগণকে; যে জনগণ অত্যাচারিত হয়, সংগ্রাম করে, পরাভূত হয় কিন্তু পুনরায় জেগে উঠে, এবং যারা ধর্মাত্ম ও রক্তাত্ম কলেবরে জীবনের বন্ধুর পথে এগিয়ে যায় চিরকাল; সব মানুষ নিয়ে গড়া এই জনসমষ্টি, সবাই আমাদের ভাই।)

বলা বাহুল্য, ইউরোপ-আমেরিকার মনীষীদের বাণীতে

তার অন্তর্নিহিত উপলব্ধির স্বাক্ষর দেখতে পেয়ে কবি আপন প্রত্যয়ে অধিকতর বেশি শক্তিশালী হয়ে উঠেছিলেন। আনন্দিত হয়েছিলেন এই ভেবে যে, হিংসা ও উন্নততার মনোও কিছু সন্ন্যাসী আছেন পৃথিবীতে যারা সমগ্র মানবজাতিকে ঐক্য, মৈত্রী ও ভ্রাতৃত্বের বন্ধনে আকর্ষণ করতে চাইছেন। যারা স্বর্গ ও বাবসায়বুদ্ধিকে অবহেলায় পার হয়ে সকল মানুষকে শুভ-বুদ্ধির পবিত্রতায় সংযুক্ত করতে চাইছেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কণ্ঠ তাঁদের সমবেত কণ্ঠের সঙ্গে মিলে মিলাতে চেয়েছে, এবং তৎকালীন ভারতের সংকীর্ণ রাজনৈতিক বুদ্ধি সেই স্তরে আপন মিল খুঁজতে অসম্মত ছিল কবি অতিশয় গ্রাহ্য হয়েছিলেন, এবং মেজনাট্য তাকে অন্য খাতে প্রবাহিত করার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন। তাঁর নিশ্চিত ধারণা হয়েছিল, যে-কোনো জাতি বা দেশ এখন থেকে নিজের দেশকে একান্ত সন্তুষ্ট করে দেখবে তার সঙ্গে তার কালের সমগ্র পৃথিবীর বিরোধ দেখা দেবে। সেই দেশ কোনো মতেই আর শাস্তি পাবে না। মেজনা আধুনিক বিশ্ব পরিস্থিতিতে প্রতিটি দেশ আপন স্বার্থের অথবা কল্যাণের জন্য যে চিন্তা করবে সেই চিন্তাকে রাখা হয়েই সমস্ত বিশ্বসর নিযুক্ত করতে হবে। কবির মতে, ইহাই আধুনিক রাষ্ট্রসামান্য বৈশিষ্ট্য।

সেদিনকার ভারতের নিকট কবির বাণীর যে তাৎপর্য ও প্রয়োজনীয়তা ছিল, আজকের অর্থাৎ ১৯৬১ সালের ভারতের নিকট তার প্রয়োজনীয়তা কমপক্ষে শতগুণ, অথবা অন্য এক দিক থেকে। সেদিনকার ভারতের বিশ্ববোধ জাগ্রত না হয়ে থাকলেও, এবং একটি প্রধান জাতিগত এনেকোর অস্তিত্ব তৎকালে থাকলেও মোটামুটিভাবে জাতীয় সংহতি বজায় ছিল; সমগ্র ভারত সমবেত কণ্ঠে জাতীয় দাবীর কথা ধোঁয়া করতে পেরেছিল। কিন্তু, আধুনিক কালের ভারত? রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেদিন যে অভাবের জন্য অস্তরে ক্ষুব্ধ হয়েছিলেন, সেই বিশ্ববোধ আজকের জাতীয় মানসে উপস্থিত; সমগ্রতঃ প্রয়োজনীয়তা বিজ্ঞ মাত্রায়ই উপস্থিত। যে কোনো আন্তর্জাতিক ঘটনা আমাদের চিন্তায় তড়িৎ গতিতে প্রতিফলিত হয়, এবং তার ভাবনায় আমাদের ব্যাকুল করে তোলে। জনগণের গণতান্ত্রিক অধিকারে কোথায় ও হস্তক্ষেপ ঘটলে, বর্ণবৈষম্যের নীতিতে বা জাতিগত কারণে মানুষ বিশ্বের কোন প্রান্তরে নিপীড়িত হলে আমাদের চিত্ত অত্যন্ত স্বাভাবিক ক্ষুব্ধ হয়, আমরা প্রতিবাদের বাড় তুলি। বিশ্বমানবের সঙ্গে আমাদের ঐক্যের চেতনায় আমরা অনায়াসে আজ দেশের সীমা লঙ্ঘন করে বিশ্বের পানে ছুটে যেতে চাই। এ দিক থেকে সত্যই আমাদের অভাব ঘোচেছে। বাইরের দিক থেকে নতুন ভারতবর্ষ নিজেকে প্রসারিত করেছে, সেই প্রসারের প্রাপ্য যে সম্মান যে সম্মানও তাকে বর্নিত করেছে। কিন্তু, অন্য দিক থেকে, অত্যন্ত অপ্রত্যাশিতভাবে নতুন এক লজ্জাজনক অভাব সৃষ্টি হয়েছে; সেই অভাব তাকে ভেতরের দিক থেকে দুর্বল করে ফেলেছে; জাতীয় সংহতির অন্তরতম সত্তার দিক থেকে আজকের ভারতবর্ষ দরিদ্র, সঙ্কচিত। ভারতের অভ্যন্তরে ভৌগোলিক অর্থাৎ আঞ্চলিক বৈশিষ্ট্য অত্যধিক প্রাধান্য অর্জন করে চলেছে; যা স্থানিক অতএব খণ্ডিত, তা বৃহৎ ও অখণ্ডতার দাবীতে স্বাধিকার প্রমত্ত হয়ে উঠেছে। আমার এই মন্তব্যের বিশদ আলোচনা নিম্নপ্রয়োজন,--মহারাষ্ট্র বিদর্ভ, পাঞ্জাব, আগাম ও তৎসংলগ্ন পার্বত্য অঞ্চল, ইত্যাদি এলাকার দিকে তাকালেই আমার বক্তব্যের প্রকৃত তাৎপর্য উপলব্ধি করা যাবে। ফলে, অখণ্ড ভারতীয় যে সত্তা

বা জাতীয় চেতনা আমাদের রাজনৈতিক চিন্তা, কর্ম ও ইতিহাস-বোধকে এক সমগ্রের পথে, বৃহৎ মানব অভিজ্ঞতার পথে বিনে নিয়ে যাবে বলে আমরা আশা করেছিলাম, সে আশা আজ অপহৃত। সমগ্রের ঐক্যে যেন এক অপ্রতিরোধ্য ভাঙ্গন দেখা দিয়েছে; ভারতবর্ষ বিশ্বের পানে তাকাতে শিখলেও যেন নিজেকে ভুলতে চলেছে। মেজনাট্য, আমার মনে হয়, এই মুহূর্তে আব্বিসমূত ভারতের পক্ষে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভারতবোধ একান্ত অপরিহার্য।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের দেশের বোধও পালিত দেশের ধারণার মত স্থূল নয়, তা এক অনুপম বৈচিত্র্যে উদ্ভুল। দেশ বলতে তিনি কখনও ভৌগোলিক জর্ডাপের স্থূল, নদী-বন-পাহাড় ঘেরা স্থানকে বুঝতেন না; যে প্রাকৃতিক সীমান মনো থেকে কিছু সংখ্যক মানুষের জীবন গড়ে উঠে, সেই সীমা তাঁর নিকট দেশ নয়; তাঁর দেশ অন্য কিছু, অন্য এক সত্তা। তিনি বলেছেন, দেশ শুধু মানির দেশ নয়, সে মানবচরিত্রের দেশ। দেশের ভৌগোলিক প্রকৃতি আমাদের দেহ গঠন করে সত্য, কিন্তু আমাদের মানব-চরিত্রের দেশ থেকেই প্রেরণা লাভ করে আমাদের চরিত্র, আমাদের মানস-পরিমণ্ডল গড়ে উঠে।

দেশের এই সংজ্ঞার কথা দিয়েই আমরা রবীন্দ্র-মানবের বিশালতার সঙ্গে পরিচিত হই। ভৌগোলিক সংখ্যাকে পশ্চাৎপাটী রূপে থাকা করে, কথিতঃ তার উল্টে উঠে, তিনিদেশের একবৃহত্তর ভাবনায় উদ্ভুদ্ধ, যে-দেশ মানুষ নিয়ে গঠিত, মানুষের পারস্পরিক সম্পর্ক, তার স্বাধীনতার, তার ইতিহাস, ইত্যাদি সমস্ত কিছু নিয়ে এক ঐশ্বর্যশীল মানবিক সত্তা। এই মানবিক বিশ্বই প্রকৃত সত্তা অর্থে দেশ। বিভিন্ন দেশের মানির সীমানার মধ্যে এই দেশের এক রূপ, আর জাগতিক সম্পর্কের বৃহত্তর পরিবিতে তার আরেক রূপ। দেশের সীমায় থেকে মানবপ্রকৃতি ও মানব-চরিত্রের বিশেষ বোঝে অনুপ্রাণিত হয়ে, তার সঙ্গে আত্মিক সম্পর্ক স্থাপন করে আমাদের মন ইতিহাসগ্রায়ী হয় এবং বিশেষ এষণার চেতনায় জীবনের সার্বিকতা অনুসন্ধান করে। দেশের ইতিহাসের আশ্রয় দেশের মানুষের পক্ষে অতিশয় মূল্যবান। কারণ, সেই আশ্রয় যদি আমাদের না থাকে তো বিশ্বের নিকট আমাদের পরিচয়ও কিছু থাকে না; আর পরিচয়ের অভাব ঘটলে শক্তিরও অভাব। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁই মানির চেতনায় সমৃদ্ধ না থেকে অস্তর-সম্পদের শক্তিতে শক্তিশালী হতে চেয়েছেন, মানবচরিত্রের ঐশ্বর্যে সত্তা হতে চেয়েছেন।

এই মানবচরিত্রের দেশ যখন বিশ্বের বিরূতি পরিবিতে সংস্থাপিত হয়, তখন মানুষের দেশের সীমা আপনিত্বেই অস্তুহীন দিগন্তে প্রসারিত হয়; তখন মহাকাশ তার সীমানা। সেই বিরূতির অধিকার লাভ করে মানুষের চেতনায় এই অনুভবে উদ্ভাসিত হয়ে উঠে, যে, সে একা নয়, তার দেশও একা নয়; সে যেমন তার দেশও তেমনি ঐ মানবিক বিশ্বের মহাকাশে একটি বিন্দুমাত্র। এখানকার অন্য অসংখ্য বিন্দুর সহায়তায়, তাদের সাহচর্যে, তাদের ঐশ্বর্যের অধিকার লাভ করে, মানুষ সত্তা হয়ে উঠে; বহুর সমবায়ের সে এক, এই তার সত্তা পরিচয়। বিশ্বের এই মানব পরিবারই মানুষের দেশ; এই মানব পরিবারেই তার জন্ম, এখানেই সে আশ্রিত। এখানকার বিরূতি স্তম্ভদুঃখ হাসি-কান্নার সে অংশীদার, যেমন সে অংশীদার তার ইতিহাসের, তার

ঐশ্বর্যের, তার সৃষ্টির। মানবিক বিশেষ বোধে এবং মানব-চরিত্রের বিপুলতার অনুপ্রাণন করেছে। তার ব্যক্তিমায়ের চরিত্র তার আপন মহিমায় উদ্ভাসিত হতে পারে, এবং সমগ্র মানুষের নিকট সত্য হয়ে উঠতে পারে। এই বোধই প্রকৃত দেশ-বোধ।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের ইতিহাসবোধ নিয়ে কোন বিতর্কের অবতারণা করব না, সে প্রশ্ন অব্যাহত। তাঁর বিশেষ ভারতবোধ থেকে তাঁর দেশ ও দেশের মানুষ কি ভাবে লাভবান হতে পারে সেটিই আমার পতিপাদ্য। কবি মনে করতেন, ইতিহাসের ভিতর দিয়ে প্রত্যেক জাতিই কোনো একটা চরম তত্ত্বের সন্ধান এবং তা লাভ করে। ভারতবর্ষও অনুরূপ একটা চরম তত্ত্বের সন্ধান এবং আপনায় মতো তার প্রকাশকে সম্ভব করে তুলেছিল। রবীন্দ্র-দৃষ্টিতে সেই তত্ত্বের স্বরূপ হল—প্রভুত্বের মধ্যে ঐক্যস্থাপন, বিভিন্ন মত ও পন্থাকে এই লক্ষ্যের অভিমুখী করা এবং বহুর মধ্যে এককে নিঃসংশয়-রূপে অন্তরতর রূপে উপলব্ধি করা, আর একান্ত বাহ্য যোগসং-পাখিক বিভিন্ন জাতির মধ্যে একতা করা যায় তা বিন্দে না করে তার অন্তরের নিগূঢ় যোগকে অবিকার করা। কবি সেজন্য ভারতবর্ষীয় সভ্যতাকে মিলনমূলক বলে বিশ্লেষণ করে ভারত-ভূমিকে মহামানবের মিলনপ্রাণ রূপে কল্পনা করেছেন। বিভিন্ন প্রবন্ধে ও কবিতায় কবি ভারত-ইতিহাসের সেই অন্তরপ্রাণ বাণী প্রচার করেছেন, এবং তাঁর কাছে আমরা উদ্ভূত আল্পনা শুনেই পেয়েছি, আমাদের চিত্তে মানবতার উদ্বোধন যন্ত্রি আলোকের বার্নারদায় জেগে উঠার।

কবি আরও মনে করতেন, আপন ভৌগোলিক সীমায়, আপন জাতীয় অক্ষ-এর সীমায় যে জাতির চিত্তাকর্ষ সীমাবদ্ধ থাকে, তার কোনো সৃষ্টি নেই; বরং কালের শাসনে সেই দেশ একদিন পৃথিবী থেকে বিলুপ্ত হয়ে যায়। কিন্তু, বিনাশ বা বিলোপ কোনো দেশেরই কাম্য নয়। তাই, প্রত্যেক দেশ বা জাতিই এমন কোনো প্রকাশের দ্বারা আপনাকে দেখা করা করতে চায় যা তাকে বিশেষ অন্যান্য জাতি ও দেশের সঙ্গে যোগস্বত্ব করে; এমন কোনো সত্যের অনুসন্ধান যে ব্যাপ্ত হয় যা সমগ্র পৃথিবীর নিকট গ্রহণীয়। জাতিতে জাতিতে অথবা বিশেষ প্রতি মৈত্রীর ভাবনায় ব্যক্তিগত বা দেশগত দ্বন্দ্ববোধ বা অক্ষ-এর উদ্ধৃত ভাব বিলুপ্ত হয়, প্রীতির বন্ধনে বিশ্বমানবের একতা গড়ে উঠতে পারে। ভারত-ইতিহাসের যে-রোপ রবীন্দ্রনাথের উদ্বোধিত হয়েছিল তাতে তিনি এই সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছিলেন, ভারতবর্ষ ঐ মৈত্রীর আলোকে একদা ভাস্বর ছিল; আর শুধু তাই নয়, সেই আলোক-দীপ্তি যে আপন ভূখণ্ডের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ করে রাখেনি। বাইরের পৃথিবীর নিকট তা প্রকাশ করতে পেরেছিল; তাই “ভারতের বাহিরে ভারতবর্ষ বেখানে তার মৈত্রীর সোনার-কাঠি দিয়ে স্পর্শ করেছে সেখানেই শিল্পকলার কী প্রভূত ও পক্যশর্চা বিকাশ হয়েছে। শিল্পসৃষ্টি মহিমায় যে-সকল দেশ মহিমাম্বিত হয়ে উঠেছে।” ঐ সব দেশে ভারতবর্ষের এই পরিচয়ই তার প্রাণ পরিচয়।

ভারতবর্ষের সত্য পরিচয়ের এই হলো এক দিক। আরেক পরিচয় হল তার নিজের কাছে নিজের পরিচয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ গল্পানন্দীকে ভারতের আভ্যন্তরীণ পরিচয়ের প্রতীক রূপে গ্রহণ করে বলেছেন, এই নদী অনাদি কাল ধরে, ভারতের এক বৃহৎ পরিচয়কে বহন করে আসছে; “ভারতের বহুদেশ বহুকাল ও বহুচিন্তের ঐক্যবাহী তার স্রোতের মধ্যে বহমান।” এ এমন এক পরিচয় যা সমগ্র ভারতের, যা সর্বকালীন ও সর্বজনীন,

প্রাদেশিকতার বিন্দুমাত্র কার্পণ্যও যাকে কোনভাবে কলুষিত করেনি। অর্থাৎ, ভারত-ইতিহাসের যে শ্রেয়সের কথা রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন, সে শ্রেয়সের সাধনা ভারতবর্ষ সমগ্রভাবে করেছে, যেমি কোনো আঞ্চলিক অথবা প্রাদেশিক বা স্থানিক বোধে খণ্ডিত হয়নি; বিভিন্ন অঞ্চলের বিভিন্ন জাতির বিভিন্ন জনপদের এক অভূতপূর্ব সংশ্লেষের মধ্য দিয়েই সমগ্রভাবে ভারত সেই শ্রেয়সের কাম্য করেছে। এবং তাকে আপন প্রকাশের মধ্যে উপলব্ধি করে একদা সে বন্যও হয়েছিল।

কিন্তু কাল বদলায়, এবং তার পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মানুষের মনেই আগে ভাবান্তর। তাই আদর্শ রূপান্তরিত হয়, শ্রেয়সের কথা মানুষ অকমাৎ বিস্মৃত হয়ে যায়। পূর্বেই কথিত হয়েছে, তাঁর সমকালীন ভারতের বিশ্ববোধ জাগ্রিত না হওয়ায় কবি মনে-প্রাণে অত্যন্ত ক্ষোভ ও ব্যথা অনুভব করেছেন; তেমনি, ভারতের নিজের কাছে তার নিজের সত্য পরিচয় বিন্দে হয়ে যাওয়ায় অর্থাৎ ভারত-ইতিহাসের চিরস্থল আদর্শের কথা তাঁর কালের মানুষ বিস্মৃত হওয়ায়ও তিনি কলম আঁচত করেনি। অত্যন্ত আক্ষেপের সঙ্গে তিনি বলেছিলেন, সত্যের যে-বন্যা একদিন ভারতবর্ষের দুই কূল উপচিয়ে দেশে দেশে প্রবাহিত হয়েছিল, ভারতের প্রবাহিনীতে তা তলার নৈমে গিয়েছে কিন্তু তার জল-সঞ্চয় আজো দূরের নানা জলাশয়ে গভীর হয়ে আছে। (বৃহত্তর ভারত, ১৩৬৪) অর্থাৎ ভারতের সত্য বাণীকে আর ভারতবর্ষে খুঁজে পাওয়া যাবে না, ভারতকে খুঁজতে হবে ভারতের বাইরে; সেইসব দেশকে কবি আমাদের তীক্ষ্ণকন্ধান বলে অভিহিত করে গেছেন। কবির এই আক্ষেপ তাঁর দেশের পক্ষে ছিল অত্যন্ত লজ্জাকর। সেই লজ্জার হাত থেকে আমরা বাঁচতে পারতাম যদি সমগ্রভাবে আভ্যন্তরীণ বিরোধ ছাড়া করে এক অঞ্চল অবিস্তার সভ্যরূপে বিকশিত হতে পারতাম। কিন্তু, আমাদের পক্ষে তা সম্ভব হয়নি; বরং বহুদিন অনভিপ্রেত বিরোধের যন্ত্রণায় চিরভিন্ন হয়ে আমাদের সদয় থেকে সেই একেবার বাণী অবহেলিত; এবং যে আলোকের দীপ্তি একদা ভারত অন্য দেশকে দেখাতে পেরেছিল সে দীপ্তি তার আপন অন্তরে আজ অনুপস্থিত।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভাবতান যে তাকে আধুনিক কালের ভারতের জীব রূপ দেখে যেতে হয়নি; যদি হত তবে কী নিদারুণ বেদনায় যে তাঁর অদ্বৈতবাদী চিত্ত কেঁদে উঠত, তা কল্পনাও করা যায় না। ভারতবর্ষ স্বাধীনতা অর্জন করেছে, এবং নতুনতর অর্থে ইতিহাসিক দিক থেকে সজীব ও জীবন্ত হতে চাইছে; বহু শোষণ ও অত্যাচার উত্তীর্ণ ভারত আবার নতুন করে বেঁচে থাকতে চাইছে। কিন্তু, তার আভ্যন্তরীণ আবহাওয়া মূল-কলুষিত, কেননা, তার ইতিহাসের মর্মবাণীর সঙ্গে ভৌগোলিক সংকীর্ণতার বিরোধ দেখা দিয়েছে, যা অপেক্ষাকৃত গুরুত্বহীন তাই অত্যধিক গুরুত্বের দাবিতে চকল হয়ে উঠেছে।

যে কোনো জাতির পক্ষেই ইতিহাসিক দিক থেকে বেঁচে থাকতে চাওয়ার অর্থ নতুন শ্রেয়স নতুন মূল্যের সৃষ্টি। তার যে ইতিহাসের অবিকার সেই ইতিহাসে আশ্রয় থেকে প্রবাহিত হতে থাকা জাগতিক সম্পর্কের আলোকে তাকে নতুনতর বন্ধনে বিশেষ সঙ্গে আবদ্ধ হতে হবে এবং নতুনতর বিশ্ববোধে অনুপ্রাণিত হতে হবে। ঐ মূল্য এবং বিশ্ববোধ তাকে সৃষ্টির এক বন্দর থেকে



TO CHINA
March 21, 1924

চীনের পথে
(২১শে মার্চ ১৯২৪)

People often ask me about the meaning of my pictures. I remain silent even as my pictures are. It is for them to express and not to explain. They have nothing ulterior behind their own appearance for the thoughts to explore and words to describe and if that appearance carries its ultimate worth then they remain, otherwise they are rejected and forgotten even though they may have some scientific truth or ethical justification.

—Tagore

...মনে পড়ে, ছপুর্ন বেলার জাগ্রিম বিছানে কোণের ঘরে একটা ছবি
আঁকার খাতা লইয়া ছবি আঁকিতেছি। সে যে চিত্রকলার কঠোর
সাধনা তাহা নহে।' সে কেবল ছবি আঁকার ইচ্ছাটাকে লইয়া আপন
মনে খেলা করা।...

—জীবনস্মৃতি



THE POET ENGAGED IN DRAWING

My pictures are my versification in lines.
If by chance they are entitled to claim
recognition it must be primarily for some
rhythmic significance of form which is
ultimate, and not for any interpretation of
an idea, or representation of a fact.

—*My Pictures.*



শিল্পাঙ্কনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ



.....আমার ছবি রেখায় রচিত কবিতা। দৈবাৎ যদি তা সাধারণের
দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণের যোগ্যতা অর্জন করে তবে বুঝতে হবে তার মধ্যে
একটা রূপের ছন্দিত প্রকাশ ঘটেছে। এইটুকুই সর্বশেষ কথা। এর
আর কোনো অর্থ নেই। এ কোনো ভাবের ব্যাখ্যা নয়, কোনো
ঘটনার বর্ণনা নয়,—এর মধ্যে আছে শুধু ছন্দের প্রকাশ।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ

...আমার বয়স সত্তর হয়ে এল। আজ ত্রিশ বছর ধরে যে দুঃস্বাদ
চেঁচা করছি, আজ হঠাৎ মনে হচ্ছে যেন ভিৎ পাকা হবে। ছবি
কোনোদিন আঁকিনি, আঁকব বলে স্বপ্নেও বিশ্বাস করিনি। হঠাৎ
বছর দুই তিনের মধ্যে ছ ছ করে একে ফেললুম, আর এখানকার
ওস্তাদরা বাহবা দিলে। বিক্রিও যে হবে তাতে সন্দেহ নেই। এর
মানে কি? জীবন গ্রন্থের সব অধ্যায় যখন শেষ হয়ে এল, তখন
অভূতপূর্ব উপায়ে আমার জীবন দেবতা এর পরিশিষ্ট রচনার উপকরণ
জুগিয়ে দিলেন।

—কবি কর্তৃক শ্রীপ্রতিমা ঠাকুরকে লিখিত পত্রাংশ



IN YOKOHAMA

May 10, 1929

ইয়োকহামায়
(১০ই মে ১৯২৯)

Before I took up painting, the vision of the
World carried music to my ears, emotion
to my heart. As I was drawn to painting,
however, the mind found its place in the
great march of the vision eternal. The
plants, the animals and everything around
started assuming their own forms. And
then the lines and colour went on creating
what these expressed. No further explana-
tion is necessary.

—Letter to Jamini Ray
June 7, 1941



IN GERMANY
(11th July 1930)

জার্মানিতে
(১১ই জুলাই ১৯৩০)

The medium of literature is language, it carries its own meaning. This meaning has to be accounted for. But colour and lines are silent, they have no voice. If asked questions, they simply point their fingers with the attitude, look there, and do not ask more questions.

—Letter to Bishu Mukhopadhyay
June 23, 1941

সাহিত্যের বাহন তার ভাষা, তার নিজস্ব অর্থ আছে। এই অর্থকে বুঝিয়ে বলতে হয়। রঙ আর রেখা কিন্তু নীরব, তাদের কণ্ঠে বাণী নেই। প্রশ্ন করলে তারা অঙ্গুলি নির্দেশ করে বলবে—ঐ দেখ, আর কোনো প্রশ্ন কোরোনা।—

—বিশু মুখোপাধ্যায়কে
২৩শে জুন ১৯৪১-এ লিখিত পত্রাংশ





৭৫ বছর বয়সে

THE POET AT THE AGE OF 75

The only training which I had from my young days was the drawing in rhythm, the rhythm in thought, the rhythm in sound. I have come to know that rhythm gives reality to that which is desultry, which is insignificant in itself. And therefore when the scratch in my manuscripts cried like sinners for salvation and assailed my eyes with irrelevancy, I often took more time in rescuing him into the merciful finality of rhythm than in carrying on what was my obvious task.

—Tagore

জেলবেলা পেকে আমি একটি শিক্ষা কোরেছি, সে শিক্ষা চিত্রা ও
গবের যে ছন্দ সেই ছন্দের শিক্ষা। এটা শিখেছিলাম যে যা
এলোমেলো এবং অকিঞ্চিৎকর তার মধ্যে একটা ছন্দ আনলে তার
বাস্তব মূল্য দেওয়া যায়। আমার হাতে কাটাকুটির কৃৎসিং আকৃতি
আমার কাছে পীড়াদায়ক মনে হত, তারা যেন পাণীর মত মূর্তিলাভের
আশায় ঝাঁপে। অনেক সময় তাই হাতের কাজ কলে রেখে
সকলকণ্ঠে চিন্তে একটা ছন্দোময় রূপদান করে তাদের নিকৃতি দানের
চেষ্টা করেছি।

—রবীন্দ্রনাথ



THE POET
AT THE AGE
OF 70

...My morning days were full of Songs
and let Sunset days be full of colours...

—Tagore



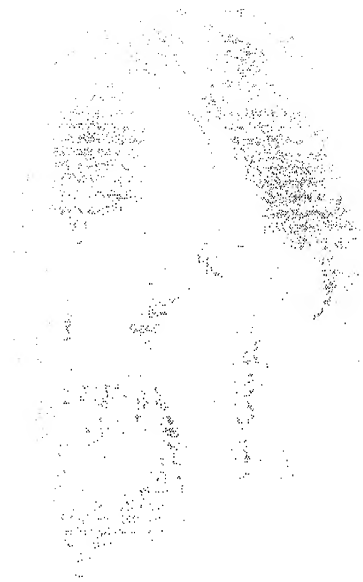
কবি (সত্তর বছর বয়সে)



—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর কিছু একেছেন তার ছন্দে এই প্রাণ স্পন্দন, এই
প্রাণশক্তি এমনি প্রবল এবং প্রচুর, যে এ যুগের খ্যাতিমান শ্রেষ্ঠ
শিল্পীদের রূপকৃতিও তার পাশে কতকটা নিম্নাভ মনে হয়। রবীন্দ্র
চিত্রকলার আর কোনোগুণ নাও যদি থাকত, শুধু এই প্রাণশক্তির
জ্যোৎস্নায় তার থেকে চোখ ফেরানো অসম্ভব।

গুরুদেবের আঁকা ছবি—নন্দলাল বসু

THE POET
AT THE AGE
OF 78



৭৮ বছর বয়সে



Tagore, the magician, who with his fingers raised, without fear of any check, had attempted to pacify the furious winds, and who declares to have cured with his intense will-power, the mortal sting of the scorpion, is timid before his creations, to the fineness and brilliance of which each one of us is a witness. We praise him, quite naturally, as for him, he doubts, questions, hesitates and smiles.

—Comtesse De Noailles

[From the foreward of a catalogue of Tagore's drawings held at Galarie Pigalle-Paris in May 1930]



THE POET AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY

শেষ জীবনে কবি

অন্য বন্দরে নিয়ে যাবে। রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্ষেত্রে ভারতবর্ষের ভবিষ্যৎ রূপ কি হবে, তা আজকের ভারতের পরিচয় থেকে নির্ধারণ করা অত্যন্ত দুঃস্থ; সেই অনাগত কালের ভারতবর্ষ গোন্ধীজীর স্বপ্নকে সার্থক করুক, কি তা কংগ্রেস-কাম্য সমাজবাদী রাষ্ট্রে পরিণত হোক, অথবা অন্য কোন মতবাদকে আশ্রয় করে রূপান্তরিত হোক, বর্তমান কালে তাকে নিয়ে বিবাদ করা চলে না। আসল কথা, ঐতিহাসিক অর্থে সজীব থাকতে হলে আধুনিক ভারতকে নতুন শ্রেণ্যের সন্ধানে সন্মুখের পানে তাকাতে হবে। সেই শ্রেণ্য কি, তার পরিচয় আমরা রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভারতবোধের আলোচনা থেকে লাভ করেছি। স্পষ্টতর করে পুনরায় বলা যায়, অল্পবিভ্রমনার কুয়াশায় আচ্ছন্ন না থেকে তাগ ও শ্রেণ্যের দ্বারা সমগ্র দেশকে সত্যভাবে উপলব্ধি করা, দেশের কর্মশক্তি ও বুদ্ধিশক্তিকে সংযত করে উন্নততর ভবিষ্যৎকে আশ্রয় করা, এবং শুভবুদ্ধিকে জাগ্রত করে সমগ্র পৃথিবীকে এক অংশ ও অবিভাজ্য সত্ত্বরূপে লাভ করা। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের কথায়, “যেদিন মানুষ স্পষ্ট করে বুঝবে যে সর্বজাতীয় রাষ্ট্রীয় সমবায়েরই প্রত্যেক জাতির প্রকৃত স্বার্থসাধন সম্ভব, কেন না পরস্পর নির্ভরতাই মানুষের ধর্ম, সেইদিনই রাষ্ট্রনীতিও বৃহৎভাবে মানুষের সত্যসাধনার ক্ষেত্র হবে।”

এই মহৎ আদর্শ যদি আধুনিক ভারতের দৃষ্টিতে উপস্থিত থাকতো তাহলে আমাদের আক্ষেপ ও দুশ্চিন্তার কোনো অবকাশ থাকতো না। তা নেই; এবং নেই বলেই আমাদের যে আশা—অর্থাৎ, স্বাধীনতা অঙ্গনের ফলে জাতীয় জীবনে যে জাগরণের স্পন্দন অনুভূত হবে তা থেকে “এক জাতি, এক প্রাণ, একতা”-র উদ্বোধন হবে—আমাদের এই আশা চরিতার্থ হয়নি। ভারতের জনতা জেগে উঠেছে ঠিকই, কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথ-প্রাণিত একেবারে সংহত ঐশ্বর্য নিয়ে নয়, বিভেদের বিষয় নিয়ে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভারত-ঐতিহাসের প্রবাহের মধ্যে প্রাদেশিকতার বিন্দুমাত্র কাঁপণও দেবতে পাননি, কিন্তু আজ সেই প্রাদেশিকতার কলুষই উত্তরোত্তর বিস্তৃত হচ্ছে, এবং রাষ্ট্রদেহের সর্বাস্থে বিষ ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে। এক প্রান্তের সঙ্গে আরেক প্রান্তের বিরোধ, এক রাজ্যের সঙ্গে অন্য রাজ্যের মতান্তর ও ফলে পারস্পরিক অবিশ্বাস, রাজ্যের গীমানা নিয়ে কলহ, একই রাজ্যের অধিবাসীদের মধ্যে একেবারে অভাব ও বিসংবাদ ভাষার প্রণেয় সমন্বীলতার অভাব যা ক্রমাগত প্রকাশ্য হানাহানিতে পরিণত হয়ে চলেছে; এক কথায়, বর্তমান ভারত তার আঞ্চলিক অঙ্গ-এর মোহে এত বেশি মোহাচ্ছন্ন যে বৃহত্তর একেবারে বাণী প্রায় বিস্মৃত। এমন কি, রাষ্ট্র কর্তৃপক্ষও একেবারে আদর্শকে গণমানসে উজ্জীবিত রাখতে পারছেন না।

এক কালের উজ্জ্বল ভারত কেন মহতের পথ থেকে সরে দাঁড়াল, এবং কেন আপন দেশের পরিচয়ে সে আজ এত দীন, তার অনেক কারণ আবিষ্কার করা যেতে পারে। আমার ব্যক্তিগত ধারণা, ভারত-ঐতিহাসের ব্যর্থতার অন্যতম প্রধান কারণ তার দুর্বল জাতীয়তাবাদ। কালের সংকেত গ্রহণে অক্ষম ভারতীয় সমাজমানসে জাতীয়তার বোধ পূর্বাপর দুর্বল ছিল; জন্ম থেকেই যেন তা পঙ্ক। এবং দুর্বল বলেই রাষ্ট্রীয় অভ্যাসের শুভলগ্নে ভারত যেন একখানি সম্পূর্ণ বিস্মৃত হল যে, মানুষের স্রষ্ট শক্তিকে মুক্তিদান করার কর্মই সর্বাপেক্ষা গৌরবময় কর্ম; ভুলে গেল যে, যে-দেশে প্রত্যেক মানুষের মূল্য স্বীকৃত সে-দেশে সমস্ত জাতি সমস্ত সম্প্রদায় আপনাই বড় হয়ে উঠে। কোনো গণ্ডী বা সংকীর্ণ গীমার মধ্যে নয়, কারণ ও ন্যায়সঙ্গত দাবী অস্বীকার করা বা কারও অসঙ্গত দাবীকে অকারণ স্নেহের প্রথমে স্বীকার করার মধ্যে নয়,

উদ্দেশ্যের সমতায়, আদর্শের মহানুভবতায় এবং জাতীয় সংহতির সার্বিক চেতনার মধ্যে মানুষের শক্তিকে উদ্বোধিত করাই প্রকৃত জেগে ওঠা। সেই পথই সঠিক পথ। কাউকে চোখ রাঙ্গিয়ে ছোট করে রাখা সহজ হতে পারে, কিন্তু ঐ সহজ কর্মটাই অনেক সময় গভীর দুঃখের কারণ হয়। আমাদের বর্তমান কালের ভারতবর্ষের পক্ষে একথা স্মরণ রাখা বোধ করি অত্যন্ত জরুরী যে, জাতীয় একেবারে বোধে উদ্ভাসিত ভারতের সামগ্রিক পরিচয় যদি আমরা বিশ্বের নিকট সর্বদা জাগরুক না রাখতে পারি তাহলে আমাদের উদার বিশ্ববোধ কোনো কাজেই লাগবে না; ভারত সর্বদা সর্বত্র উপেক্ষিতই হবে, অতীত তাকে কোনো সাহায্য করবে না।

এইখানেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভারতচিন্তা আমাদের পথের নির্দেশ দিতে পারে। আমাদের জাতীয় জীবনের বহু অন্ধকার কোণে কবি আলোকপাত করে গেছেন, তাঁর চিন্তায় বনিত হয়ে আমরা বিশ্বের পথে চলতে শিখেছি। বুকের বিশেষ ভাবনায় তিনি সব সময় ব্যাকুল বিচলিত ছিলেন; সেইজন্য ঐতিহাসের ক্রান্তিলগ্নে আমরা কোন্ পথে অগ্রসর হবো, কোন্ কার্যক্রম আমাদের বৃহত্তর সন্ধান দেবে, কীভাবে আমরা সংকীর্ণতা জয় করে বৃহত্তর একেবারে চেতনায় উদ্ভূত হবো, কীভাবে মানুষকে আমরা তার আপন মর্যাদায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে পারব, এসব সমস্যা নিয়ে তিনি যত চিন্তা করেছেন, সমাধানের যত নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন, তেমন আর কারও কাছ থেকে আমরা পাই নি। তাঁর ধ্যানের ভারতবর্ষ সব খণ্ড সত্ত্বকে নিয়ে এবং তা অতিক্রম করে, সব জাতি সব ধর্মকে নিয়ে গঠিত এক বৃহৎ সত্ত্ব, এই সমুদ্রে সব বিরোধের অবসান, সব হিংসা অপহৃত। একেবারে ঐশ্বর্যে আকাশের মত উন্নত তার চিত্ত, সমুদ্রের মত গভীর। তিনি বলেছেন, পরনির্ভরশীলতাই মানুষের ধর্ম। এটা ব্যক্তি-মানুষের ক্ষেত্রে যেমন সত্য, তেমন সত্য রাজ্যে রাজ্যে, রাষ্ট্রে রাষ্ট্রে। এই বোধের অনুপ্রেরণা দিয়েই আমরা সমস্ত কলহ, সমস্ত হিংসা এবং প্রাদেশিকতার সমস্ত বিষ উত্তীর্ণ হতে পারি। রবীন্দ্র জন্ম-শতবার্ষিকীর শুভদিনে বিরোধ-কণ্টকিত ভারতের পক্ষে তাঁর বাণী অস্তরে গ্রহণ করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা আত্মস্মিতক—“সেই মৈত্রীর মহানদীটি নিজের নবোই পাওয়া চাই তাহলেই আমার চিত্তে যেখানে অরণ্য সেখানে মন্দির উঠবে, যেখানে মরুভূমি সেখানে সৌন্দর্যের নগর উঠবে, জীবনের তপস্যা জয়যুক্ত হয়ে সার্বিক হয়ে উঠবে।” (বৃহত্তর ভারত) তিনি বলতেন, শব্দকে অত্যন্ত বাড়িয়ে ও চড়িয়ে দিয়ে যে জিনিষটা পাওয়া যায় সেটা ছল্লার, আর শব্দকে স্তর দিয়ে লয় দিয়ে সংযত পরিপূর্ণতা দিলে যে জিনিষটা লাভ করি সেটা হলো সঙ্গীত; ছল্লারটা শক্তি, সঙ্গীতটা অমৃত। শক্তির পরিমাপ করা চলে, কিন্তু অন্ধ দিয়ে বা হাতে বহরে কোনো ভাবে অমৃতকে মাণ্ডার উপায় নেই। শব্দের ক্ষেত্রে যা সত্য রাষ্ট্রীয় জীবনের পক্ষেও তা সত্য। মানুষ যেখানে প্রাদেশিক স্বার্থের গীমায় আবদ্ধ থেকে পরস্পর কোলাহলে বিবাদে হানাহানিতে বাস্ত, তখন সে ছল্লার বা শক্তির অধীন; আর যখন সে সকলের সঙ্গে একেবারে অনুভবে উদার, তখনই তার এবং অন্য সকলের জীবনে সঙ্গীত বা অমৃতের আনন্দ বেজে উঠে। ব্যবহারিক জীবনের ক্ষেত্রে প্রত্যেক জাতি বা দেশ বা ব্যক্তির পক্ষেই অমৃতের সাধনায় সার্বিকতা অর্জন করা সম্ভব, যদি সে কেবলি আপনাকে সকলের দিকে উৎসর্গ করতে শিখে।



রবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টিতে অর্থনীতিক বিবর্তন

প্রিয়তোষ মৈত্রয়

আধুনিক অর্থনীতিক ইতিহাস যন্ত্র-শিল্পের অর্থনীতি-বিবর্তন চিহ্নিত। সামন্ত্যুগীয় অর্থনীতির যখন প্রয়োজন ফুরিয়ে এসেছে—ক্রমবর্ধমান মানুষের অভাব আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষা যখন আর তৃপ্ত হচ্ছে না এই কাটামোর তখন যন্ত্রশিল্পের উদ্ভব ঘটে। বৈয়য়িক ও মানসিক জীবনে এক অভূতপূর্ব সম্ভাবনা সৃষ্টির পথ খুলে গেল—একদিকে ধর্মাত্মতা, কসংস্কার অজ্ঞতার হাত থেকে মানসমুক্তি ঘটিল, অপরদিকে জীবিকাসংগ্রহের কাজে সারাদিন অসহায়ভাবে প্রকৃতির দুর্যারে ধরনা দেওয়ার হাত থেকে মানুষ মুক্তি পেল। যন্ত্রশিল্পের অবদান মানুষের সবচেয়ে বড় আশা সবচেয়ে প্রিয়তম আকাঙ্ক্ষা মানুষ ও মানসমুক্তির পথ বেধে দেওয়া। অবশ্য একথা সত্য, যন্ত্র-শিল্প-আশ্রিত বনতন্ত্রের লোভতন্ত্রের কুলিল চক্রান্তে সে পথ আজ আচ্ছন্ন। রবীন্দ্রনাথসে যন্ত্রশিল্পের এই সত্যাকার পথ উদ্ভাসিত হয়েছিল। তিনি লিখলেন, “যুরোপীয় সভ্যতায় বিজ্ঞান চর্চার সামনে যদি কোন বড় নৈতিক সাধনা থাকে সে হচ্ছে মানুষের মনোকে যন্ত্রে না বেঁধে প্রাকৃতিক শক্তিকেই যন্ত্রে বেঁধে সমাজের কাজ আদায় করা। একথা নিশ্চিত যে বিজ্ঞানকে একপাশে ঠেলে রেখে কেবল হাত চাপিয়ে দেশের বিপল দারিদ্র্য কিছুতে দূর হতে পারে না। মানুষের জাণা এগিয়ে চলবেনা, কেবল তার করাই চলতে থাকবে, মানুষের পক্ষে এত বড় কুলিগিরির সাধনা আর নেই।” প্রাকৃতিক শক্তিকে নিজের কাজে লাগিয়ে একদিকে তার বৈয়য়িক দৈন্য ও মানসিক অন্ধতা দূর করাই মানব সভ্যতার মূল সত্য। আর এ প্রচেষ্টা আধুনিক বিজ্ঞান থেকে শুরু হয়নি—মানুষ তার ইতিহাসের স্তূপের অতীতে যেদিন প্রকৃতির কাছ থেকে সংগ্রহ করা উপাদানের সাহায্যে তার জীবন সংগ্রাম সহজ করবার, তার জীবিকা সংগ্রহের দায় থেকে মানসিক ও দৈহিক মুক্তির কাজে লিপ্ত হয়েছে সেদিনই তার এই মানব ও মানসমুক্তির মহানবুতের উদ্বোধন ঘটেছে। কবি তাই আবার লিখলেন,—“মানুষ যেদিন প্রথম চাকা আবিষ্কার করেছিল সেদিন তার এক মহাদিন। অচলজড়কে চক্রাকৃতি দিয়ে তার সচলতা বাড়িয়ে দেওয়া মাত্র; যে বোঝা সম্পূর্ণ মানুষের কাঁধে ছিল তার অধিকাংশই পড়ল জড়ের কাঁধে।চাকা অসংখ্য শূদ্রকে শূদ্র থেকে মুক্তি দিয়েছে। এই এই চাকাই চরকার, কুমোরের চাকে; গাড়ির তলায় স্থলসূক্ষ্ম নানা আকারে মানুষের প্রভূত ভার লাঘব করেছে। এই ভার লাঘবের মত ঐশ্বর্যের উপাদান আর নেই। একথা মানুষ বহু যুগ পূর্বে প্রথম বুঝতে পারল যেদিন প্রথম চাকা ঘুরল। ইতিহাসের এই প্রথম অধ্যায়ে যখন চরকা ঘুরে মানুষের বনউৎপাদনের কাজে

লাগল বন তখন চক্রবর্তী হয়ে চলতে লাগল। সেদিনকার চরকাতে এসে খেমে রইল না।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই উক্তি আধুনিক অর্থনীতির দুটি পরম-সত্যের নির্দেশ দেয়—একটি উৎপাদনব্যবস্থা প্রতিষ্ঠা ও মানুষের প্রয়োজনানুযায়ী বিবর্তনশীল। যারা উৎপাদনব্যবস্থার এই প্রতিষ্ঠা চরিত্রকে উপলব্ধি না করে বিশেষ কোন পর্যায়েই শেষ স্তর বলে মেনে নেন তাঁরা সভ্যতার প্রতিষ্ঠা বৈশিষ্ট্যকে স্বীকার না করে পুরাতনকেই হয় আঁকড়ে ধরতে চান নয় পেছনে ফিরে যেতে চান। রবীন্দ্রনাথসে কিন্তু সভ্যতার এই প্রতি-বাদীরূপ মূর্ত হয়ে উঠেছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখলেন :..... “..... অচলতাই হচ্ছে মূল দারিদ্র্য। এমন উপদেশ যদি মেনে বসি : যে সূত্রে কানির পক্ষে আদিমকালের চরকাই শেষ তাহলে বিশ্বের পূর্ণ প্রসন্নতা কখনোই পাবনা। স্তব্রতা লক্ষ্যী বিষুপ হবেন।” (চরকা, ১৩৩২—কালান্তর)।

অপরটি বৈজ্ঞানিক পদ্ধতিতে উন্নত যন্ত্র-পরিচালিত উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থায় অর্থনীতিক উৎপাদন বৃদ্ধি পায়, মানুষের এম লাঘব হয় এবং তার জাণা এগিয়ে চলে। কল্যাণবন্দী অর্থনীতির মূল সত্য এই বিশ্লেষণে ইঙ্গিতের হয়ে উঠেছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেদিন গান্ধীজির চরকা আন্দোলনের তাঁপু প্রতিবাদ জানিয়েছিলেন। শুধু হাত ঘুরিয়ে দুঃখ দেশবাসীর দুঃখ দূর হতে পারেনা—তাঁচাড়া, এতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ মনে করতেন, মানুষের জাণা এগিয়ে চলবেনা। কবি মনে করতেন, উন্নত উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থার পরিবর্তনের মধ্যে দিয়ে যেমন মানুষের বৈয়য়িক দৈন্য দূর হবে তেমনি তার মানসিক উৎকর্ষসাধনের পথও প্রসারিত হবে। অর্থনীতিতে শিল্পায়নের তত্ত্বগত ব্যাখ্যা করতে গিয়ে বলা হয়েছে এ হ'ল ‘humanisation of nature and naturalisation of human being’। রবীন্দ্রনাথসে এ সত্য স্বীকৃতি পেয়েছিল। গান্ধীজি সেদিন যন্ত্র-শিল্প আশ্রিত বনতন্ত্রিক সমাজের ভয়ঙ্কর বিকট শোষণকারী মূর্তি দেখে যন্ত্রশিল্পের বিরোধিতা করেছিলেন। বনতন্ত্রিক অর্থনীতিক কাটামোপ্রসূত শোষণ, দারিদ্র্য, বেকারসমস্যা এবং সর্বোপরি এই অর্থনীতির অন্যতম প্রতিভা ইংরেজদের ভারতে অনুসৃত-নীতির ফলে সমৃদ্ধশালী স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণ গ্রামীণ অর্থনীতির লক্ষ্য—স্থূপের উপর গড়ে ওঠা এই শোষণতন্ত্রে নিষ্পেষণে স্বদেশবাসীর সামগ্রিক দুঃখময় জীবনে মহারাজীর মনে তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি করেছিল, তাই তিনি বৃহদায়তন যন্ত্রশিল্পকেই লক্ষ্যকারী শক্তি হিসেবে দেখেছেন। বনতন্ত্রগত অর্থনীতির প্রয়োজনে গড়ে ওঠা কেন্দ্রীভূত রাষ্ট্রেরও তিনি বিরোধিতা করেছেন এবং দারিদ্র্য করেছেন এই বৃহদায়তন যন্ত্রশিল্পকেই। তাই তিনি সেদিনের শ্রেণীশোষণ, শোষণ, দারিদ্র্যপূর্ণ জীবনের হাত থেকে বাঁচবার

পথ হিসেবে বিবেচিত কৃষিশিল্পের দ্বারা স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণ গ্রামীণ ভারত গড়ে তোলার কথা ঘোষণা করেছেন, অথচ যে বস্তুগত উপকরণ, সামাজিক রীতিনীতি, বন্যপ্রাণিক বিধি-ব্যবস্থা এর মূলে তা গাঙ্গীযানগে স্বীকৃতি পেল না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাথে এইখানেই গাঙ্গীজীর প্রভেদ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বর্তমান সভ্যতার সংকটের জন্য যন্ত্রশিল্পকে ত্যাগ করতেন বরং সভ্যতার অগ্রগতির অন্যতম শক্তি হিসেবে স্বাগত জানিয়ে ভারতের ক্ষেত্রে তার আসন পাওয়ার দাবী জানিয়েছিলেন। সভ্যতার সংকট, শোষণ, দুঃস্থতা, দারিদ্র্যের জন্য কবি দর্শী করেছিলেন যন্ত্রশিল্প আশ্রিত লোভতন্ত্রকে। আমরা অর্থনীতিতে যাকে বলি শ্রেণী বৈষম্য ও শোষণ ভিত্তিক বস্তুতন্ত্র।

ভারতবর্ষের বর্তমান অর্থনীতিক দুর্ব্যবস্থার মূলে ইংরেজ-অনুসৃত অর্থনীতিক ক্রিয়াকর্মই যে দায়ী একথা রবীন্দ্রনাথ দৃঢ়তার সাথেই ঘোষণা করেছেন। তিনি লিখেছিলেন “.....ভারতবর্ষে বাণিজ্য ও যান্নাঙ্কো ও যান্নাঙ্কোর অঙ্কত সংগম কালে বণিক রাজ্য দেশের বন-করতন্ত্র শিকড়গুলোকে কি করে ছেদন করতে লাগলেন সে কথা বলবার কথিত এবং অত্যন্ত শ্রুতিকটু.....এদেশের বর্তমান দুর্ব্যবস্থার দারিদ্র্যের উপক্রমণিকা সেইখানে। ভারতবর্ষের বন্যপ্রাণী ছিল। কিন্তু সেটা কোন বাহন যোগে ধীপাশ্রিত হয়েছিল সে কথা যদি তুমি তবে পৃথিবীর আধুনিক ইতিহাসের একটি তবু আমরা এড়িয়ে যাব।”

ইংরেজ প্রবর্তিত অর্থনীতিক বিধি-ব্যবস্থার অদূরপ্রসারী প্রতিক্রিয়ার কথা আজকের মানুষের বিস্মৃত হবার নয়। কেননা এর ফলে জনসাধারণের অসহ্য দুঃখে দিন বাপন শুরু হ’ল কিন্তু জুপের অদূর ভবিষ্যতের কোন প্রতিশ্রুতিই তারা পেল না; তারা বিদেশী শাসকের স্বার্থে পরিচালিত বন্যপ্রাণিক-বিধি-ব্যবস্থায় দিন কাটায় কিন্তু এই ব্যবস্থায় মূলধন সংরক্ষণ ঘটেনা; তারা বহুদিনের জীবিকা হারানো কিন্তু তাদের নতুন জীবিকার ব্যবস্থা হ’ল না; পশ্চিমের উন্নত বিজ্ঞানের আলোতে তাদের চোখ বাঁধিয়ে গেল, কিন্তু তবুও তারা অনুন্নতির প্রকৃতির পরের উচ্চতর জীবী হয়েই রয়েল। ইতিহাস-অনভিজ্ঞত এই অস্বাভাবিক পরিবর্তনের কুফল আজও আমাদের জীবনের সর্বক্ষেত্রে ব্যাপ্ত হয়ে রয়েছে।

স্বদেশের শিল্পের জন্য কাঁচামালের যোগান সংগ্রহ করার উদ্দেশ্যে ও বৃত্তিগত বন্য বনিকদের বন্যপ্রাণীভাণ্ডার আকাজক্ষায় ইংরেজ প্রবর্তিত ভূমিব্যবস্থা ও নতুন ব্যবস্থানুযায়ী অর্থে প্রাজ্ঞা দেবার প্রথা প্রচলিত হ’ল। ফলে, একদিকে বাজারের উদ্দেশ্যে ও বিশেষ বিশেষ বাণিজ্যিক ফসল উৎপাদনের উদ্দেশ্যে কৃষি উৎপাদন পরিচালিত হ’ল; অপরদিকে এর ফল হিসেবে মুদ্রাভিত্তিক বিনিময়গত অর্থনীতিক ক্রিয়াকর্মের বিকাশ ঘটল। আবার অন্যদিক দিয়ে দেখি, বিদেশী শাসক অনুন্নত নীতির ফলে পূর্বের বাপক ও সমৃদ্ধশালী কৃষির শিল্প ও বাণিজ্যচ্যুত জন জমিতে আশ্রয় নিয়ে নতুন ভূমি ব্যবস্থার প্রতিক্রিয়ায় ভূমিহীন কৃষি মজুরে পরিণত হ’তে থাকল। এমন করে ভারতে বন্যপ্রাণিক অর্থনীতির বিধি-ব্যবস্থা পরিবেশ গড়ে উঠল বিদেশী শাসকের স্বদেশের বন্যপ্রাণিক অর্থনীতির স্বার্থে অথচ দেশের উপাদানে যত্নকার যন্ত্রশিল্প আশ্রিত বন্যপ্রাণিক অর্থনীতিক ক্রিয়াকর্মের কোন সূচনাই ঘটল না। এই বন্য অর্থনীতিক জীবন-যাত্রা জনসংখ্যা বৃদ্ধির সাথে সাথে আরও সংকটময় হয়ে উঠল। বৃহদায়তন শিল্পায়ণ না ঘটায় বিকল্প বৃত্তির অভাবে দেশের শতকরা

৭৫ জনের একমাত্র জীবিকা প্রাচীন পদ্ধতিতে পরিচালিত ক্ষুদ্রায়তন ভিত্তিক কৃষি অর্থনীতির অবস্থা গোচরীয় হয়ে উঠল, দুর্ভিক্ষ, অনাহার, প্রাচুর্য বেকার, মহামারী সাধারণ মানুষের নিত্য-সঙ্গী হয়ে উঠল। অথচ ভারতে যে বিপুল জনসংখ্যা ও প্রভূত প্রাকৃতিক সম্পদ রয়েছে তাতে যদি সঠিক পথে শিল্পায়ণের কাজে অগ্রসর হওয়া যেত তবে ভারতের অর্থনীতিক সংকট আজ এমন তীব্র হয়ে দেখা দিত না। তা সেদিন আমরা পারিনি। ব্যক্তিগত উদ্যমে তা সম্ভব হয়নি বিদেশী রাষ্ট্রের প্রতিকূলতায় ও বিদেশী শিল্পের প্রতিযোগিতায়। রাষ্ট্রীয় উদ্যমের তে আশাই করা যায় না। এই অবস্থায় অশেষাশ্রমী প্রতিক্রিয়া যা ঘটেছিল তা ইতিহাস নির্দেশিত। ক্রমবর্ধমান জনসংখ্যা অনুন্নত পদ্ধতিতে পরিচালিত ক্ষুদ্র ক্ষুদ্র জমি নির্ভর, শিক্ষিত জন বৃত্তির অভাবে বেকার, মাকাতার আমলে উৎপাদন পদ্ধতি হেতু মাথাপিছু স্বল্প উৎপাদন হার, ইংরেজ শাসকের স্বার্থে সৃষ্ট পরগণা জমিদার ভূস্বামী শ্রেণী ভোগবিলাসে লিপ্ত আর সাধারণ মানুষ এমনশনক্লিষ্ট, উদ্যমহীন, অশিক্ষিত এবং ভাণ্ডাও পরকালে বিশ্বাসী।

দেশের অর্থনীতিক জীবনের এই গোচরীয় অবস্থা লাঘব করবার পথ হিসেবে রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছিলেন “একথা মনে নেওয়া যাক, তখনকার কালে যে মৈপূণ্য ও যে শকল উপায়ের যোগে হাতের কাজ চলত ও শিল্পীরা খেয়ে পরে বাঁচত বাস্তব প্রতিযোগিতায় তারা স্বতঃই নিষ্ক্রিয় হয়ে পড়েছে। অতএব প্রজাদের বাঁচবার জন্য নিত্যই প্রয়োজন ছিল সর্বপ্রযত্নে যন্ত্রকুশল করে তোলা জাপান অতি অল্পকালের মধ্যে ধনের যন্ত্রবাচককে আয়ত্ত করে নিয়েছে, যদি ‘তা’ না সম্ভব হ’ত তা হ’লে যন্ত্রী যুরোপীয় যন্ত্রযন্ত্রে সে ধনে প্রাণে মারা যেত। আমাদের ভাগ্যে সে সুযোগ ঘটল না।.....রাজা আমাদের মান্দ্রনা দিয়ে বলছেন, এখনও ধনে প্রাণে যেটুকু বাকী সেটুকু রক্ষা করার জন্য আইন এবং চৌকিদারদের ব্যবস্থার ভার রয়েল খামার হাতে। এদিকে আমাদের অগ্রব্র বিদ্যাবুদ্ধি বন্ধক রেখে কংগ্রেস প্রাণে আমরা চৌকিদারদের উদ্ভির খরচ যোগাচ্ছি।”

এ প্রসঙ্গে আমাদের দেশের কৃষি অর্থনীতির সংকটের কারণ বিশ্লেষণ করতে গিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে কথা তিরিশ বৎসর পূর্বে লিখেছিলেন আজ তা সর্বজন স্বীকৃত। শিল্পায়ণের অভাবের ফলে এবং সেই কারণে অন্যান্য বৃত্তির অযোগ্যের অনুপস্থিতির দরুণ আমাদের দেশের ক্রমবর্ধমান মানুষ জমিতে গিয়ে ডাঁড় জমায়; অপরদিকে ভূমিস্বত্ব ও উত্তরাধিকার আইনানুযায়ী জমিগুলি ক্রমশঃই ক্ষুদ্রাকারে বিখণ্ডিত এবং বিক্ষিপ্ত হ’তে থাকে; ফলে উৎপাদন uneconomic অর্থাৎ অর্থনীতি দিক দিয়ে অবিবেচনক হয় না। কবি বাংলাদেশের কৃষিয় এই গোচরীয় অবস্থা দেখে অত্যন্ত ব্যথিত চিত্তে লিখেছিলেন, “ভোর বেলা থেকে হাল লাড়ল এবং গোরু নিয়ে একটি একটি করে চাষী আসে, আপন টুকরো খেতটুকু ঘুরে ঘুরে চাষ করে চলে স্বেচ্ছা দেখেছি।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি) অন্যত্র লিখলেন “মাকাতার আমলের হাল-লাড়ল নিয়ে আল বাঁধা টুকরো জমিতে ফসল ফলানো আর কুটো কলগীতে জল আনা একই কথা।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি)।.....এবিষয়ে আজ হিমন্ত নেই—আমাদের দেশে উৎপাদন সংগঠন ও ব্যবস্থার দোষে উৎপাদন হার স্বল্প। কৃষি এলাকায় উন্নত উৎপাদন পদ্ধতির অনুসরণ সম্ভব হ’লে কৃষির উৎপাদন অনেক বৃদ্ধি পেত। রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছিলেন “চাষীকে চাষের পথে উত্তরোত্তর অধিক পরিমাণে চরিতার্থ

করবার চেষ্টা অন্যান্য কোন কোন কৃষিক্ষেত্র-বহুল দেশে চলছে। সেসব ভাষণায় বৈজ্ঞানিক বুদ্ধি খাতিয়ে মানুষ চাষের বিস্তার উন্নতি করেছে। আমাদের দেশের সমস্ত তুলনা করলে দেখা যায়, তারা তাদের ভূমি থেকে আমাদের চেয়ে দ্বিগুণ চারগুণ বেশি ফসল আদায় করেছে।.....চাষের উৎকর্ষ উদ্ভাবনের দ্বারা চাষীর উদ্যমকে যৌবন আনা খানিবার চেষ্টা না করে তাকে চরকা ঘোরাতে বলা শক্তিসহীনতার পরিচয়। আমরা চাষীকে অলস বলে দোষ দেই; কিন্তু তার অবস্থার উন্নতি সাধনের উদ্দেশ্যে আমরা যখন তাকে চরকা পরতে পরামর্শ দিই তখন সেটিতে আমাদের মানসিক আলস্যের প্রমাণ হয়।” (চরকা—কালান্তর ১৩৩২ সন)। এই দুর্ব্যবস্থার সমাধানের পথ হিসেবে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেদিন সমস্ত ভূমি একত্র করে সমবায় প্রবর্তনের কথা বলেছেন। তিনি সেদিন লিখেছিলেন, “ভূমির স্বত্ব নাশ্রয়তঃ জমিদারের নয়। সে চাষীর। কিন্তু জমিদারী প্রথার অবসান ঘটিয়ে চাষীর হাতে জমি বিলিয়ে দেবার অন্যতম বিপদ চাষীর দারিদ্র্য এবং এই দারিদ্র্যের স্তব্যাগে মহাজন, চাষীর জমি গ্রাস করে নেবে।” আজ জমিদারী প্রথা অবসানের পর এই সমস্যা বহু বিতর্কের বিষয় হয়ে উঠেছে। একদিকে দারিদ্র্যের দ্বারা জমি মহাজনদের হাতে গিয়ে পড়বে, অপরদিকে জমির মালিকানা ফিরে পেলেও একক প্রচেষ্টায় দরিদ্র কৃষকের পক্ষে চাষের উন্নয়নমূলক আধুনিক ব্যবস্থা অবলম্বন সম্ভব নয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ কৃষি অর্থনীতির এই সমস্যা উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন—তিনি লিখেছিলেন, “চাষীকে জমির স্বত্ব দিলেই সে স্বত্ব পরম্পরভেদেই মহাজনদের হাতে গিয়ে পড়বে, তার দুঃখভার বাড়বে বই কমবে না।” (বাণেশ্বরের চিঠি) আমাদের দেশে সমবায় আন্দোলন শুরু হয়েছে এই শতকের একেবারে প্রথম দিকে (১৯০৪) কিন্তু আজ পর্যন্ত সমবায় আন্দোলন সাংঘাতিক হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি। তার কারণ সমবায় আন্দোলন দুঃস্থ চাষীর যতীকারের নিজেদের আন্দোলন হয়ে উঠতে পারেনি এবং এই আন্দোলন শুধুমাত্র ঋণ দেওয়ার আন্দোলনের মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ হয়ে রয়েছে। সরকারী হুকুমনামায় কৃষকদের ঘাড়ে এই আন্দোলন অনেকটা জোর করে চাপিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ আমাদের দেশের সমবায় আন্দোলনে এই বাস্তবতার কারণ সেদিন উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন। তাই তিনি কৃষি অর্থনীতির সংস্কারের কথা বলতে গিয়ে যখন সমবায় প্রবর্তনের কথা বলেছেন, তখন তিনি সাথে সাথে সতর্ক করে দিয়ে বলেছেন, “কোন-এপারোনিভের যোগে অন্য দেশে যখন সমাজের নীচের তলায় একটি সৃষ্টির কাজ চলছে, আমাদের দেশে নিপে নিপে ঠিকার দার দেওয়ার বেশি কিছু এগোয়নি।” সমবায়ের সত্য নিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ লিখেছিলেন, “জীবিকার ক্ষেত্রে স্বাধীন স্বাভাবিক মানুষের সত্যকে এতদিন অবজ্ঞা করে এসেছিলেন। সেখানে স্বাধীন মানুষের সত্যকে আজ প্রমাণ করবার ভার নিয়েছে। এই কথাই বোঝাতে চলেছে যে, দারিদ্র্য মানুষের অসামান্য বন্য তার সন্নিবেশ। সকল দিকেই মানব সভ্যতার এইটাই গোড়াকার সত্য।” (চরকা—কালান্তর, ১৩৩২)। রূপ ও চীন দেশে যে সমবায়নীতি সফল হয়েছে তার মূলে এই সত্যই কাজ করেছে।

ইংরেজ অনুন্নত শোষণ মূলক অর্থনীতি অনুসরণের ফলে আমাদের দেশের আর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা কি শোচনীয় পর্যায়ে নেমেছিল একথা পূর্বে আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। এপ্রসঙ্গে বিদেশী সরকার তার দায়িত্ব অস্বীকার করে এসেছে—দোষ

দিয়েছে—ভারতবাসীর অতি প্রজন্ম বৈশিষ্ট্যের উপর। ভারতের সেদিনের দারিদ্র্য, অশিক্ষা, দুঃস্থ কষ্টের মূলে অতিপ্রজন্মই কারণ এই অজুহাতের আড়ালে সেদিনের বিদেশী শাসক তাদের শোষণ এবং আমাদের অর্থনীতিকে জোর জবরদস্তী করে অনুন্নত রাখবার চেষ্টা করেছে। উন্নত অর্থনৈতিক উৎপাদন ও ধন ব্যবস্থা—কোনদিকে তারা নিজেদের সাম্রাজ্যবাদী স্বার্থচাড়া নজর দেয়নি। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাই লিখেছিলেন, “নিউমারের সাহিত্যিক ক্রোড়পত্রে দেখা গেল Mockee নামক এক লেখক বলেছেন যে, ভারতের দারিদ্র্যের root cause : মূল কারণ, হচ্ছে এ দেশে নির্বিচার বিবাহের ফলে অতিপ্রজন্ম। কথাকীর ভিতরকার ভাবটা এই যে, বাহির থেকে যে শোষণ চলছে তা দুঃস্থ হত না যদি স্বল্প হয় নিয়ে স্বল্প লোকের হাঁড়ি টেঁচে পুঁছে খেত। গুনতে পাই ইংল্যান্ডের ১৮৭১ খ্রীস্টাব্দ থেকে ১৯২১ খ্রীস্টাব্দের মধ্যে শতকরা ৬৬ সংখ্যা হারে প্রজাবৃদ্ধি হয়েছে। ভারতবর্ষে পঞ্চাশ বৎসরের প্রজাবৃদ্ধির শতকরা হার শতকরা ৩৩। তবে এক যাত্রায় পৃথক ফল কেন। অতএব দেখা যাচ্ছে root cause প্রজাবৃদ্ধি নয়, root cause স্থানের অভাব। তারও root কারণ।” (বাণেশ্বরের চিঠি)

এ থেকে বন্যতন্ত্রের আধুনিক অর্থনীতির স্বরূপ প্রস্ফুটিত হয়ে উঠেছে। অর্থনৈতিক ইতিহাসের চাত্র মাত্রেরই এ তত্ত্ব জানা আছে, পশ্চিমের বন্যতন্ত্রিক অর্থনীতি পুঁজু হয়েছে ভারত তথা এশিয়ার বন্যতন্ত্রে। এসব দেশগুলিকে জোর করে অনুন্নত ঔপনিবেশিক অর্থনীতির পর্যায়ভুক্ত রেখে পশ্চিমী বন্যতন্ত্র তার সমৃদ্ধি ঘটিয়েছে। তাই আজ যখন অনুন্নত দেশগুলি অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন কাজে লিপ্ত হয়েছে তখন পশ্চিমের দেশ গুলিতে অর্থনীতিতে স্বভাবতঃই প্রতিক্রিয়া ঘটিছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যন্ত্র-শিল্পকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছেন। কিন্তু যখন যন্ত্রশিল্পকে আশ্রয় করে বন্যতন্ত্র কবির ভাষায় লোভিত্তর সংস্কৃতির ও সভ্যতার সংকট সৃষ্টি করেছে তখন তিনি এইসব লোভিত্তরী রাষ্ট্রকে ক্ষমা করেননি। আবার যখন এই লোভিত্তরের অবসান ঘটাবার উদ্দেশ্যে সমাজতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির উত্তর ঘটিছে তাকে তিনি হৃদয়ের সকল গুণেচ্ছা দিয়ে অভিনন্দিত করেছেন।

পূর্ববর্তী আলোচনায় স্বদেশের অর্থনৈতিক বিবর্তন প্রসঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ধ্যান ধারণার আলোচনা করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু সেদিন স্বদেশের বাইরে পশ্চিমী জগতেও বন্যতন্ত্রিক অর্থনীতিতে শোষণ, ধন বৈষম্য ও বাণিজ্য সংকটবর্তের লক্ষণ পরিস্ফুট হয়েছে। উনিশ শতকের শেষার্ধ্বে যুরোপের বিভিন্ন দেশে বন্যতন্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির কল্যাণধর্মী স্বজনশীল শক্তি নিঃশেষিত হয়ে একচোঁটিয়া বন্যতন্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির পতন ঘটিছে এবং অপর দিকে, বন্যতন্ত্র আশ্রিত যে গণতন্ত্র একদিন মানুষকে সাম্রাজ্যবাদের স্বাধীনতার আদর্শে অনুপ্রাণিত সেই বন্যতন্ত্র সেদিন তার সংকট থেকে আত্মরক্ষার উদ্দেশ্যে গণতন্ত্রিক রাষ্ট্র কাঠামোর আড়ালে যুরোপ, এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা প্রভৃতি দেশগুলিতে জাতীয়তাবাদের নামে সাম্রাজ্যবাদীরূপে অত্যাচার অসাম্য, শোষণ দাসত্ব পরাধীনতার দস্তহস্তে মূর্ত হয়ে উঠেছে। যন্ত্র-শিল্পকে আশ্রয় করে বন্যতন্ত্রিক লোভিত্তরের আত্মপ্রকাশে সভ্যতা সংস্কৃতির যে সংকট

দেখা দিয়েছিল তার স্বরূপ বিশেষ প্রসঙ্গে কবি লিখেছিলেন, “যন্ত্রযুগ এল, লাভের অঙ্ক বেড়ে চলল অসম্ভব পরিমাণে। এই লাভের মহামারী সমস্ত পৃথিবীতে যখন ঢুড়াতে লাগল তখন যারা দূরবাসী অনাথীয়া যারা নির্ধন, তাদের আর উপায় বইল না—চীনকে খেতে হল আফিম; ভারতকে উজার করতে হল তার নিজস্ব; আফ্রিকা চিরদিন পীড়িত, তার পীড়া বেড়ে চলল। এতো গেল বাইরের কথা, পশ্চিম মহাদেশের ভিতরেও বন্য-নির্ধনের বিভাগ আজ অত্যন্ত কঠোর।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি)

শ্রেণী শোষণ ও ক্রমবর্ধমান বন-বৈষম্যের প্রতিক্রিয়ায় বনতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির সংকট প্রথম অবস্থায় যুরোপের বনতান্ত্রিক দেশগুলিতে উনিশশতকের শেষার্ধ্বে অর্থনৈতিক ও বাণিজ্যিক আকারে দেখা দেয়। কিন্তু বনতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির প্রকৃতি এই যে, তাকে বাঁচতে হলে তার শোষণের শক্তিকে তীব্রতর এবং ক্ষেত্রকে ব্যাপকতর করতেই হবে। ফলে, বিভিন্ন বনতান্ত্রিক দেশগুলির মধ্যে অতর্কিত এবং শোষণের ক্ষেত্র নিয়ে তাদের সেই সংকটের চরম প্রকাশ ঘটে যুদ্ধে। অবশ্য পরিণামে এর প্রতিক্রিয়া অন্যরূপেও দেখা দেয়: অর্থনৈতিক সংকট ও শোষণের হাত থেকে আত্মরক্ষার উদ্দেশ্যে শোষিত জন অর্থনৈতিক শোষণ বিহীন ব্যবস্থা প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য সমাজ বিপ্লব সংগঠিত করে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বনতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির এই সংকট ও ইতিহাস নির্দেশিত পরিণতি প্রত্যক্ষ করেছেন। তাই তাঁর বিভিন্ন রচনাতে জাতীয়তাবাদ এবং আধুনিক রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্রিয়া কল্পের বিরুদ্ধে তীব্র প্রতিবাদ ধ্বনিত হয়েছে। (কালান্তর, Nationalism প্রভৃতি গ্রন্থে)

বিংশ শতাব্দীতে এই বিগত যৌবন বনতন্ত্র আয়তনকার উপায় হিসেবে সাম্রাজ্যবাদে রূপান্তরিত হয়েছে; বিভিন্ন বনতান্ত্রিক দেশ তাদের স্বকীয় আর্থিক শোষণ ক্ষমতা ও প্রতিপত্তি বৃদ্ধির প্রচেষ্টায় পারস্পরিক প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা মহাযুদ্ধে এবং তিরিশের বাণিজ্য সংকটে রূপ নেয়। অপর দিকে বনতান্ত্রিক ও সাম্রাজ্যবাদী অর্থনৈতিক বিধি ব্যবস্থার বিরুদ্ধে সাধারণ মানুষ বিদ্রোহী হয়ে উঠেছে এবং সেই বিদ্রোহ বনতন্ত্র আশ্রিত গণতন্ত্রের অবমান ঘটিয়ে ব্যক্তিগত শোষণ ও বন বৈষম্য বিধীন সমাজতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতি প্রতিষ্ঠায় রূপায়িত হয়েছে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই নতুন শক্তির আবির্ভাব প্রত্যক্ষ করেছেন এবং গুরু প্রত্যক্ষ করেন নি এই নতুন সমাজ ব্যবস্থার প্রতিভুলক মহাতীর্থ বলে স্বাগত জানিয়েছেন।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বনতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতির এই পরিণতি প্রসঙ্গে লিখেছিলেন “আধুনিক কালে ব্যক্তিগত ধনসঞ্চয় বন্যকে যে প্রবল শক্তির অধিকার দিচ্ছে তাতে সর্বজনের সম্মান ও আনন্দ থাকতে পারে না। তাতে এক পক্ষের অসীম লোভ, অপর পক্ষে গভীর ঈর্ষা, মাঝখানে দুস্তর পার্থক্য। সমাজে সংযোগিতার চেয়ে প্রতিযোগিতা অসম্ভব বড়ো হয়ে উঠল। এই প্রতিযোগিতা নিজের দেশের এক শ্রেণীর সঙ্গে অন্য শ্রেণীর এবং বাইরে এক দেশের সঙ্গে অন্য দেশের। তাই চার দিকে সংশয় হিংসা অস্ত্র শাণিত হয়ে উঠেছে কোন উপায়েই তার পরিমাণ কেউ ধর করতে পারছে না। আর পরদেশী মায়া এই দুরস্থিত ভোগ রাস্কসের কুখ্য মোচাবার কাছে নিযুক্ত তাদের রক্ত বিরল কৃশতা যুগের পর যুগ বেড়েই চলেছে। এই বর্জবিস্তৃত কৃশতার মধ্যে পৃথিবীর অশান্তি বাসা বাঁধতে পারে না, এ কথা

যারা বলদপে করনা করে তারা নিজের গোয়াতুমির অঙ্কতার দ্বারা বিভ্রান্ত। যারা নিরন্তর দুঃখ পেয়ে চলেছে সেই হস্ত-ভাগ্যরাই দুঃখবিহীনতার প্রেরিত দূতের পথান সহায়। তাদের উপবাসের মতো প্রলয়ের আশ্রয় সঞ্চিত হচ্ছে। “বর্তমান সভ্যতার এই অমানবিক অবস্থায় বনশৈথিল্য নীতির অভ্যুদয়।”

রুশ দেশে বিপ্লবের পর যে নতুন অর্থনৈতিক বিধি ব্যবস্থা হয়েছিল তা রবীন্দ্রনাথকে প্রভাব ভাবে আলোড়িত করে। রুশদেশের পরিচালক ও সাধারণ মানুষ দেশের আর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন প্রচেষ্টায় যে বনিষ্ট নীতি ও পদ্ধতি এবং যে অতুলনীয় আত্মত্যাগ ও কষ্টের স্বীকার করেছিলেন সে কথা কবি বার বার সশ্রদ্ধচিত্তে উল্লেখ করেছেন; আর সেই মানুষের ভারতের সেদিনের হতভাগ্য চাষী মজুরদের দুঃখের জীবনের কথা সমর্থন করে ব্যক্তিগত ও বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়েছেন।

লক্ষ্য করবার বিষয়, যোগিত্যের সঙ্গে সেদিন অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নকল্পে সমাজতন্ত্রী পরিকল্পনার যে প্রচেষ্টা চলেছিল তার প্রকৃত স্বরূপ রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাছে পড়েছিল। তিনি এই প্রচেষ্টার প্রতি আনুষ্ঠানিক সংস্কারিত ও শ্রদ্ধা জানিয়ে লিখেছিলেন, “এরকম দেশকে বাঁচবার উপায় কারখানার কাজ খোলা, যাকে বলে, Industrialisation। স্বদেশী-বিদেশী বন্য-মহাজনদের পক্ষে ভরাবার জন্যে কারখানার কথা হচ্ছে না, গ্রাম্যকার কারখানার উপস্থাপন হচ্ছে মনসাধারণের।” (রাশিয়ার চিঠি) আমাদের দেশের অর্থনীতির বর্তমান অবস্থায় একথা ভাল করে ভাববার সময় এসেছে। যতিনকারের পরিকল্পনার সাহায্যে শিল্পায়ন করতে হলে মূল্যবান ভিত্তিক বার্জ মালিকানার অস্তিত্ব একটি অন্যতম গতিবলক। কেননা এ না হলে, “অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন শূন্যপ্রাপ্তি এবং জনজীবনে দুঃখ পাড়ি প্রমাণ হয়ে ওঠে অথচ যদূর ভবিষ্যতে যথেষ্ট আশায় আলোর কোন ঈর্ষিত পাওয়া যায় না।

গ্রাম্য শিল্পায়নের কাজে একদিকে মনসাধারণের আনুষ্ঠানিক উদ্যম উৎসাহ অপর দিকে তাদের বিলাস বাসনাবিহীন জীবন বারের পক্ষে অপরিহার্য। পথের গীতাবল্ল স্বর ভোগ, বিপুল ভোগ ও কষ্টের মালিকানা কল্যাণকারী শিল্পায়নের ভিত্তি স্থাপনের পক্ষে অন্যতম যত্ন। যেসবাকৃত বিপুল ভোগ ও কষ্টের সাধন তখনই মানুষ বনন করে যখন তার ভবিষ্যত শুকল মুষ্টিমেয় মানুষের উদ্দেশ্যে না ঘটে মালিকজীবন হয়। শ্রেণীবৈষম্য বিধীন সমাজ ব্যবস্থাতেই তা সম্ভব।

আনুষ্ঠানিক নির্ভর হ'লে দৃষ্টান্তে শিল্পায়নের কাজে বিস্তর সঞ্চয়ের প্রয়োজন—এই সঞ্চয় শুধু বাড়তি উপার্জন থেকে যে অনেক অপ্রয়োজনীয় বিলাস এবং কখনো কখনো প্রয়োজনীয় সামগ্রীর ভোগ নির্বৃত্তি পড়ে ওঠে। আত্মকেন্দ্র এই ভোগ থেকে বন্ধনা যা সঞ্চয়ে রূপ নিল তাই আগামী কাল বিপুল সামগ্রীর আকারে সাধারণ মানুষের জীবনে বিপুল ও বিচিত্র উপকরণ রূপে ফুটে ওঠে। সাম্রাজ্যবাদী শক্তির চক্রান্তে জর্জরিত রুশ দেশে সেই প্রাথমিক প্রচেষ্টা সেদিন চলছিল।

দরিদ্র দেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়ন পদ্ধতির মূলনীতি এই বিশ্লেষণে প্রকাশিত।

আধুনিককারীন অর্থনীতির বিবর্তনের যে প্রতিক্রিয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের ঘটেছে তার আলোচনা আমরা করছি। রবীন্দ্রনাথের অর্থনৈতিক বারণ্যকে সঠিক রূপে বুঝতে হ'লে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পর্কে কতিপয় কথা বলা প্রয়োজন।

রবীন্দ্রমানস বস্তুচিন্তায় আকর্ষণে নয়। মানুষকে তার মানবিক পৃথিবীর সর্বময় কর্তাক্রমে চিত্রিত করে সেই পৃথিবীর অগুর শক্তির বিকাশের অভিব্যক্তি রূপে ইতিহাস বা আর্থনৈতিক বিবর্তনের পর্যালোচনা তিনি করতে পারেননি। তাঁর জীবিত-কালে তিনি যুরোপে যন্ত্র-শিল্পের কল্যাণধনীর রূপ দেখেছেন এবং অভিনন্দিতও করেছেন। আবার সেই যন্ত্রশিল্প আশ্রিত ধনতন্ত্রের ভয়ঙ্কর সামান্যবাদী রূপান্তরের তীব্রভাষায় নিন্দা করেছেন। তিনি ধনতন্ত্রের এই সংকটের কারণ হিসেবে বলেন, এর মূলে রয়েছে লোভ ও শোষণ এবং লোভ ও শোষণই বর্তমান সভ্যতায় সংকটের মূঠ। কিন্তু এই লোভ ও শোষণের উৎসহল যে ব্যবহারিক উপকরণ, অর্থনৈতিক ও সামাজিক বিধি ব্যবস্থা, উৎপাদন সম্পর্ক ও কাঠামো—একথা রবীন্দ্রমানসে স্বীকৃতি পেলনা। আবার দেখি, রাশিয়াতে বাস্তব সমাজ-সম্পর্ক ও অর্থনৈতিক ভিত্তি রূপান্তরিত হওয়ার পর সমাজতন্ত্রের যে মূর্তি অভিব্যক্তি তিনি প্রত্যক্ষ করেছিলেন তাকেও তিনি তাঁর উপনিষদ

লব্ধ তত্ত্বজ্ঞান থেকেই বিশ্লেষণ করেছেন, ব্যবহারিক উপকরণ, সামাজিক অর্থনৈতিক ভিত্তি রূপান্তরের প্রকৃত কারণ, তাঁর মনে উদ্ভিত হলনা। লোভ ও শোষণের ব্যবহারিক উপকরণ অর্থাৎ উৎপাদন সম্পর্কগত অর্থনৈতিক-সামাজিক কাঠামোর অনুপস্থিতিই যে এর কারণ একথা তিনি বলেননি। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছিলেন, “উপনিষদেব একটি কথা আমি এখানে (রাশিয়া-লেখক) খুব স্পষ্ট করে বুঝেছি—মা গৃহঃ, লোভ করনা। কেন লোভ করবেনা? যেহেতু সমস্ত কিছু এক সত্যের দ্বারা পরিবাস্ত—ব্যক্তিগত লোভেতেই সেই একের উপলব্ধির মধ্যে বাধা আনে। তেন ত্যাঞ্জন ভুক্তিখাঃ। সেই একের থেকে যা আসছে তাকেই ভোগ কর।.....কারো ধনে লোভ কোরোনা। কিন্তু ধনের ব্যক্তিগত বিভাগ থাকলেই ধনের লোভ আপনিই হয়।” এই ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তি ও বিষয়চিন্তা উদ্ভূত ধন-বৈষম্যই লোভ ও শোষণের মূল এই বস্তুতাত্ত্বিক বিশ্লেষণ রবীন্দ্রমানসে স্থান পায়নি।

পঁ চি শে লৈ শা হ

পঁচিশে বৈশাখ ফিরে এলো, ঘুরে আর বার
রবি-প্রদক্ষিণ-পথে; রবির বন্দনা-গান
‘উঠে বাজি’ স্বলে জলে নভোতলে, মজ্জ তার
ঢায় দশদিশি; ভরি দেয় সেই রম্যতান
নিখিলের মর্মমাঝে, যেথা বাজে অনাহত
বীণা, তব্রী অভিনব, নব ভাষা, নব প্রাণ;
উদয়ের পথে, লয়ে আশা ভালোবাসা কত,
আশীর্বাদী দিলো আনি মধু চন্দ—গান।

শাওরী নামিয়া এলো ক্রান্ত ধরনীতে,
বুলাইল মজ্জ তার বিষবাস্প নারে--
দূরে গেল বিভীষিকা, নাহি জল আঁধিপাতে,
মৃত্যু নাই, শোক নাই; এসো গাজি শুভ্র সাজে।
মাল্য দিই বেদী মূলে; পুষ্প দিই অর্প খালে;
ধূপ জ্বালি দীপ জ্বালি নব রবি জন্মভালে ॥

---অমল ছোম

বাঙলার রেনেসাঁস ও রবীন্দ্রনাথ

ডঃ জীবেন্দ্র সিংহ রায়



ইংরেজ-লক্ষ্মীর দ্বিতীয়ালিতে যুরোপের সঙ্গে আমাদের প্রথম স্তম্ভদৃষ্টি। তাঁর, স্তম্ভদৃষ্টিই; অস্তুতঃ উগ্র জাতীয়তাবাদের আবিলিতা থেকে মুক্ত হয়ে বিচার করলে তা-ই মনে হয়। যুরোপের সঙ্গে পরিচয়ে আমরা আঘাত পেয়েছি, দরিদ্র হয়েছি, আবার হয়েছি চমৎকৃত। প্রথম যুগে পেরিয়ে দ্বিতীয় যুগে পোড়ানোর পরেই প্রশ্ন উঠেছেঃ যুরোপের কতটুকু গ্রহণ করবো, আর কতটুকুই বা বর্জন করবো। রামমোহনের কাছে প্রথম এই জিজ্ঞাসা পতিত্বনিতি। আবার কেউ কেউ ভেবেছেন, শুধুই বর্জন বা গ্রহণের কথা। রাছা রাধাকান্ত ও রেভারেণ্ড কৃষ্ণমোহন এ-প্রসঙ্গে সমর্থনীয়, আরও সমর্থনীয় বঙ্গ মহাভাব পাণ্ডা ও ইয়ং বেঙ্গলের দল। এই সব গুরুতর প্রশ্ন শেষ সিদ্ধান্তে তারা পোড়াতো পারেন নি সত্য, তবে গ্রহণ-বর্জন প্রশ্নের চিনাপোড়েনেই আমরা সক্রিয়া হয়ে যুরোপের অন্তরাঙ্গাকে ধরবার চেষ্টা করেছি, আমাদের যুগযুগান্তরের হৈব্যা ও জাডো জাগরণের শিহরণ অনুভব করেছি। আর সেই জাগরণের ফলেই আমাদের উনিশ শতকী জীবনের নানা দিগন্তে বিচিত্র কলরব, ব্যক্তিগত ও সামাজিক অস্তিত্বের নব নব মুক্তি ও বিকাশ। সদ্যোক্ত জাগৃতির প্রাণাবেগকেই মৌনামুহুরিতে রেনেসাঁসের ভাবধারা বলে গ্রহণ করা যেতে পারে।

তবে যুরোপীয় রেনেসাঁসের ইতিহাসবেত্তার কাছে বাঙলার রেনেসাঁসের তাৎপর্য যে খণ্ডিত বলে মনে হয়, তার কারণ আছে। কালের পরিবর্তনে রেনেসাঁসের ভাবধারার অদল-বদল সম্পূর্ণ সমাজবিজ্ঞান সম্মত। কিন্তু তার চেয়েও বড়ো কথা, ভারতবর্ষের বহুকালগত ইতিহাসের পিতৃ-নিম্ন, অনগ্রসর অর্থনীতি, স্থানীয় বিচিত্র সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক পরিস্থিতি, পরাধীন রাষ্ট্রের নিরস্ত্রিত রাজনৈতিক অবস্থা ইত্যাদি নানা বাস্তব কারণের জন্য এদেশের রেনেসাঁসের রূপ ও সাধনা যুরোপীয় আদর্শের সঙ্গে ঠিক মেলে না। স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্রে সমাজ-বিকাশের বিশেষ স্তরে বিপর্যয়ের নিয়মানুযায়ী বা আকস্মিক কোন বিপ্লবের ফলে জাতির জীবনে যে নবজাগরণ আসে, তার সঙ্গে 'কলোনিয়াল রেনেসাঁসের' পার্থক্য থাকবেই। দ্বিতীয়তঃ উনিশ শতকী রেনেসাঁসের নায়ক মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর গড়নটা ছিলো বিচিত্র ও জটিল, সামন্ততন্ত্রের অভিলাষের বোঝা থেকে তারা মুক্ত ছিলো না। তাদের শিক্ষার জ্ঞান, কর্মে সীমাবদ্ধন, চিন্তার সঙ্গে ব্যবহারিক জীবনের অসঙ্গতি ছিলো বলেই রেনেসাঁসের সাধনায় তাদের ভূমিকাও ছিলো আংশিক, কুণ্ঠাপূর্ণ ও স্ববিরোধী। তৃতীয়তঃ এই রেনেসাঁসের সঙ্গে হিন্দুভাগ্যবস্তুরাই জড়িত ছিলো, মুসল-মানেরা ছিলো দূরে। অবশ্য তার কারণও স্পষ্ট। এ-প্রসঙ্গে কেউ কেউ জন-সাধারণের ভূমিকার প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন, যদিও এমন

কি যুরোপেও রেনেসাঁস জন-আন্দোলনে পরিণত হয়নি। চতুর্থতঃ ইংরেজী সভ্যতা, সংস্কৃতি ও সাহিত্যের সংস্পর্শে আমাদের প্রচুর মানসিক সমুন্নতি ঘটেছিলো সত্য, কিন্তু সেই স্বদূরপ্রসারী মানস-প্রয়াসের সঙ্গে তাল রেখে আমাদের ব্যবহারিক জীবন অগ্রসর হতে পারেনি। ভাবলোক ও বাস্তবক্ষেত্রের মধ্যে একটা গুরুতর শূন্যতা ছিলো। পঞ্চমতঃ রেনেসাঁসের কালে আমরা যে যুরোপের সাফল্য পেয়েছি, তা একাধুভাবেই ইংলণ্ডীয় ও উনিশ শতকী, ইংরেজের দেশের বাইরের আর কোন দেশের সাংস্কৃতিক ও ব্যবহারিক ধর্মের তেমন পরিচয় আমরা পাইনি।

এই সমস্ত বিচিত্র জ্ঞান ও অসঙ্গতির জন্যই বাঙালীর উনিশ শতকী রেনেসাঁসের সাধনা সকলকে খুশি করতে পারে না। বাঙলার মানসিতে নবজাগরণের ইতিহাস যে রূপ নিয়েছে, তাতে বাঙালীর উজ্জীবন ও চিত্তমুক্তি সম্পূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠেনি বলে ক্ষোভ।

এবার দেখা যাক বাঙলার রেনেসাঁস বা নবজাগরণ সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি কি ছিলো। প্রাক্-ইংরেজ যুগে বাংলাদেশ ছিলো বহির্জগৎ থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন, আত্মকেন্দ্রিক আর পরিবর্তনবিমুখ কতকগুলি গ্রাম নিয়ে তৈরি। এই কুণ্ঠমণ্ডুকতায় বাঙালীর জাতির আত্মবিকাশ ব্যাহত না হয়ে পারে নি; শুধু তাই নয়, যৈনক্যবোধ থেকে একটা নিরুদ্যম জড়শক্তি আমাদের অস্তি-মজ্জায় ছড়িয়ে পড়ে মনুষ্যত্বের হানি ঘটায়। তাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন, তখনকার বাঙালীর 'যে-জগতের মধ্যে বাস সেটা সংকীর্ণ এবং অতি-পরিচিত। তার সমস্ত তথ্য এবং বস্তুধারা বংশানুক্রমে বৎসরে বৎসরে বার বার হয়েছে আবর্তিত অপরি-বর্তিত চক্রপথে, সেইগুলিকে অবলম্বন করে আমাদের জীবন-যাত্রার সংস্কার নিবিড় হয়ে জমে উঠেছে, সেই-সকল কঠিন সংস্কারের ইঁটপাথর দিয়ে আমাদের বিশেষ সংসারের নির্মাণকার্য সমাধা হয়ে গিয়েছিল। এই সংসারের বাইরে মানব-সুখাণ্ডের দিক্দিগন্তে বিরাট ইতিহাসের অভিলাজি নিরন্তর চলেছে, তার ঘর্ণমান নীহারিকা আদ্যোপান্ত সনাতনপ্রণয় ও শাস্ত্রবচনে চিরকালের মতো স্থাবর হয়ে ওঠেনি, তার মধ্যে এক অংশের সঙ্গে আর-এক অংশের খাতসংঘাতে নব নব সময়ের স্রষ্টি হচ্ছে, ক্রমাগতই তাদের পরস্পরের সীমানার সংকোচ-প্রসারণে পরি-বর্তিত হচ্ছে ইতিহাসের রূপ, এ আমাদের গোচর ছিল না।' অর্থাৎ পৃথিবীর ইতিহাসে যেখানে জঙ্গমশক্তি সদা-সক্রিয়, সেখানে বাঙালীর ইতিহাসে শুধুই যুদ্ধ তামসিকতা আর অপরিদ্যায় জড়তারই জয়। এই বন্ধ্য জড়শক্তি সমগ্র জাতির মধ্যে গতি-সম্ভারে বাধা দিয়েছে, প্রাণের বিস্তারকে ব্যাহত করেছে, নষ্ট করে দিয়েছে জীবনের স্রষ্টিধর্মিতাকে। বাঙালীর এই নিরুদ্যম

স্ববিরতা যেন স্থান শিবেরই উপমা—‘উল্লস শূভ্রটি যেখানে একা স্থির হইয়া উদ্ভবনেত্র বসিয়া আছেন, উমা নাই। দেবতার। তাই প্রমাদ পণিহেতু—কুমারের জন্ম হইবে কেমন করিয়া। নতুন প্রাণের বিকাশ হইবে কি উপায়ে।’

প্রাক-ইংরেজ যুগের বাঙালীর ব্যবহারিক জীবন ও মানস-লোকের নিঃসাড় অবস্থার কাব্যগুণিত বর্ণনাক্ষেত্র চোখে পড়েছে। বাহির থেকে বা ভেতর থেকে যদি মাঝে মাঝে প্রাণা্ত না আসে তবে কোন জাতিই প্রতিষ্ঠান ও সৃষ্টিশীল হয়ে উঠতে পারে না। বাঙালি জাতিতে চৈতন্যদেবের আবির্ভাব ছিলো এই বর্ণনের একটা আভ্যুদান। এই যোড়শ শতকের বাঙালীর জীবনে জগৎবাদের জোয়ার এসেছিলো—সমাজ, সংস্কৃতি, ধর্ম ও সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে নতুন সৃষ্টির সাক্ষ্য আমরা পেয়েছিলাম। কিন্তু চৈতন্যদেবের পর থেকে রাম-মোহনের পূর্ব পর্যন্ত দীর্ঘ দিনের ইতিহাসে এমন কোন দৃষ্ট ও মহৎ ব্যক্তিত্বের সম্মান পাই না, যার পড়াতে বাঙালীর সমাজেই নবপ্রাণের সঞ্চার হতে পারতো। সেই মহামুগ্ধীর্ণ ত্রিনিরে কোন আলোকদেবের আবির্ভাব ঘটেনি বলেই ইতিহাসের পৃষ্ঠ থেকে গেছে অপরিবর্তিত। মুসলমান রাষ্ট্রশক্তি বাঙলা দেশে একটা পটভূমি নিয়ে এসেছিলো যদ্যেই নেই, কিন্তু সেই আশা বাঙালীর চিত্তে কোন স্রষ্টাচৈত্র্য জাগিয়ে তুলতে পারেনি। বর্ণনাক্ষেত্র ভাষায় ‘বাঙালীর দাক্ষিণ্য দেশের উপরে খুব জোরে লেগেছে, কিন্তু কোনো নতুন চিন্তারাজ্যে কোনো নতুন স্রষ্টার উদ্যমে তার মনকে চেঁচিয়ে তোলেনি। তাড়াহা আরো একটা কথা আছে। বাহির থেকে মুসলমান হিন্দুস্থানে এসে বাসা বেঁধেছে কিন্তু আমাদের দৃষ্টিকে বাহিরের দিকে প্রসারিত করেনি।সেইজন্যই পরীক্ষা চরমতরপেই রয়ে গেল আমাদের প্রধান আসর।’ স্বতন্ত্র দেখা যাচ্ছে, পাঠানই হোক বা মোগলই হোক কোন মুসলমান রাষ্ট্রশক্তিই আমাদের জাতীয় উজ্জীবনের সহায়ক হয়নি। ফলে বাঙালীর জীবন নিবিচার প্রাণতৃপ্ত ও পাতনপাতক আভ্যাসিত নিয়ে দীর্ঘদিন মরণদশায় ধুক-ছিলো, বহিঃবিশ্বে যদ্যে যোগ্য হারিয়ে একান্তবিস্তৃত বহুতর মানবত্বের প্রসাদ থেকে বঞ্চিত ছিলো। আর তাতেই হয়েছিলো মানুষ হিসেবে বাঙালীর পরাজয়।

কৌশলীন বুদ্ধজগৎ যেমন পোকামাকড়ের রাজত্ব, তেমনি বাঙালীর যেদিনের স্রষ্টাশ্রবতনাবিজিত নিকৃষ্টায় অস্বাস্থ্যের প্রয়োগে মিথ্যা ও মৃত্যুর আদিপতা দেখতে পাই। অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর শেষ দিকে রামমোহনের আবির্ভাব ঘটেছিলো এমনিতর এক কালরাত্রির পটভূমিকায়। বর্ণনাক্ষেত্র বলেছেন—‘রামমোহন রায় যখন ভারতবর্ষে জন্মগ্রহণ করেন তখন এখানে চতুর্দিকে কালরাত্রির অন্ধকার বিরাজ করিতেছিল। আকাশে মৃত্যু বিচরণ করিতেছিল। মিথ্যা ও মৃত্যুর বিরুদ্ধে তাহার সংগ্রাম করিতে হইয়াছিল। মিথ্যা ও মৃত্যু-নামক মায়াবী রাজাদের প্রকৃত বল নাই, অমোঘ মন্ত্র নাই, কোথাও তাহাদের দাঁড়াইবার স্থল নাই, কেবল নিশাঘের অন্ধকার ও এক প্রকার অনির্দেশ্য বিভী-মিকার উপরে তাহাদের সিংহাসন প্রতিষ্ঠিত।রামমোহন রায় যখন জাগ্রত হইয়া বঙ্গসমাজের চারিদিকে দৃষ্টিপাত করিলেন তখন বঙ্গসমাজ সেই প্রেতভূমি ছিল। তখন শ্মশানস্থলে প্রাচীন কালের ভাবগুণ হিন্দুধর্মের প্রেতমাত্র রাজত্ব করিতেছিল। তাহার জীবন নাই, অস্তিত্ব নাই, কেবল অনুশাসন ও ভয় আছে মাত্র।’ প্রাক-ইংরেজ যুগের বাঙলাদেশের এই শ্মশান-চিত্র উনিশ শতকের

রেনেসাঁসের পটভূমি হিসেবে যে মূল্যবান, তাতে কোন সন্দেহ নেই।

তখনকার শুধু সামাজিক অবস্থা নয়, ধর্ম ও সাহিত্যও একই রকমের শোচনীয় স্তরে এসে পৌঁছেছিলো। ধর্মের সঙ্গে হৃদয়ের যতোপলক্ষির কোন সম্পর্ক ছিলো না। ধর্ম বলতে কতগুলি বাধা নিরস, গুচিতা ও কৃত্রিম গতি বোঝাতো। নিয়ম পালন করে আচার প্রবৃত্তি আর অভ্যাগ রক্ষা করে জীবনের চিন্তাকে অতি সরল করে নেওয়াই যেন নীতি ছিলো। বর্ণনাক্ষেত্র বলেছেন—‘মানুষ বলেছে যে আদিকাল থেকে ব্রহ্মা যে নিয়ম বেঁধে দিয়েছেন, তার বাহিরে যাবার যো নেই। ফলে নিতা কৃত্রিমতার দরুন তার মন অসাড় হয়ে যায়, সে তখন নিতাদর্শ অর্থাৎ সত্যকে মেনে নিতে দ্বিধা করে। আমাদের দেশের ধর্মের যখন এই রকম নিঃসাড় অবস্থা, তখন রামমোহন এসে-ছিলেন।’ আর সাহিত্য বলতেও তখন বোঝাতো বৈষ্ণবকাব্য ও মঙ্গলকাব্য। রাধাকৃষ্ণের বেনামীতে অধঃপতিত জীবনের মূল বাসনা-কাননা প্রকাশের তাগিদ থেকেই যেন বৈষ্ণব সাহিত্যের জন্ম হতে লাগলো—সপ্তদশ শতাব্দীর শেষ দিক থেকে পুরো অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দী ধরে চললো তার জের। মঙ্গলকাব্যে দেখা গেলো, এক দেবতাকে সিংহাসন থেকে খেদিয়ে দিয়ে আর-এক দেবতার অভ্যুদয়—নিতান্ত অকারণে, কারণ নতুন দেবতার মহিমা প্রতিষ্ঠায় মানুষের মর্মবুদ্ধিকে নতুন করে তৃপ্তি দেওয়ার প্রতিশ্রুতি ছিল না। বর্ণনাক্ষেত্র ভাষায়—‘ছলনা, অনায়াস এবং নিষ্ঠুরতা কেবল যে মন্দির দখল করল তা নয়, কবিদের দিয়ে মন্দির। বাজিয়ে চামর দুলায়ে আপন জয়গান গাইয়ে নিলে। লজ্জিত কবিতা কৈফিয়ত দেবার চলে মাথা চুলকিয়ে বললেন, কী করব, আমার উপর স্বপ্নে আদেশ হয়েছে। এই স্বপ্ন একদিন আমাদের সমস্ত দেশের উপর ভর করেছিল।’ অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর মহাভাগে লেখা ভারতচন্দ্রের অদ্যামঙ্গলের লিখন—পারিপাট্য ও কবিত্ব-সৌন্দর্য স্মরণীয় হলেও তা এক প্রচলিত প্রচার নিম্প্রাণ স্রষ্টা মাত্র। দেবতার মহিমা কীর্তনের ধরতাই বুলির অন্তরালে ধর্ম ও দেবতার প্রতি শুধু অবিশ্বাস নয়, বাজ ও বিক্রপের স্বর শ্রবিত। আসল কথা, সমাজের ভিত্তিমূলে যে আক্রমণ চলেছিলো, তা থেকে তখনকার সাহিত্যও আত্মরক্ষা করতে পারেনি।

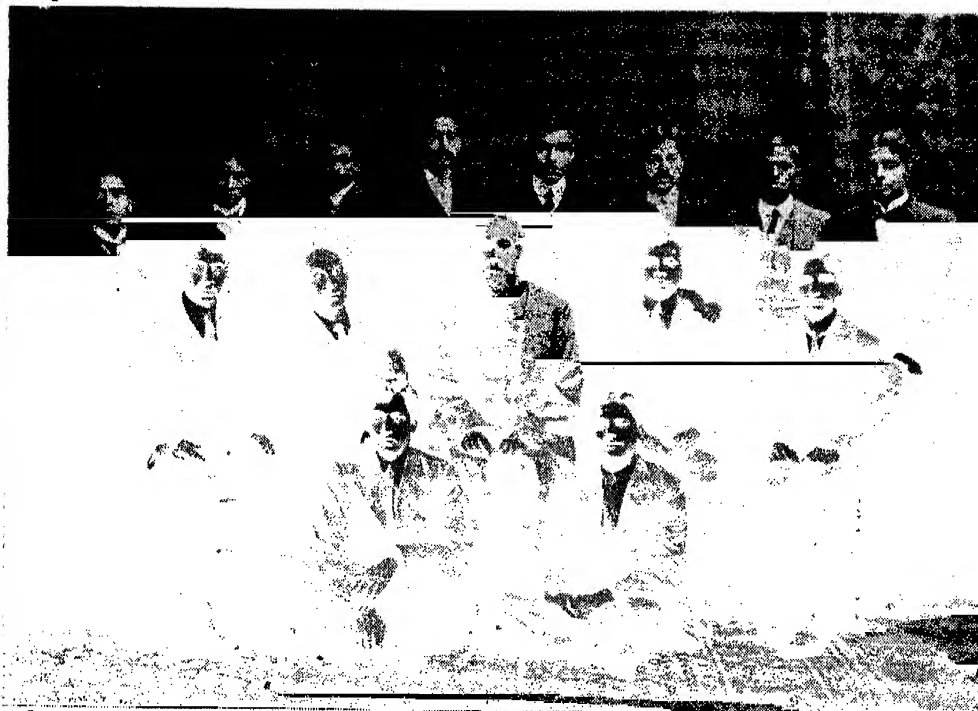
বর্ণনাক্ষেত্রের মতে, বাঙলা দেশ, সমাজ, ধর্ম, সংস্কৃতি সাহিত্যের এমনিতর শোচনীয় অবস্থায় ইংরেজ রাজত্বের সূত্রপাত এবং রামমোহনের আবির্ভাব। প্রাক-ব্রিটিশ আমলের শ্রেণী-বিন্যাস ও সমাজ-মানসে বিপ্লব ঘটানো ইংরেজের কাম্য ছিলো-না বটে, তবু ইংরেজ রাজত্বের আধিক ও সামাজিক তাৎপর্য আঠারো শতকের শেষ দিকেই আভ্যাসিত হতে থাকে। ইংরেজ-প্রবর্তিত পরিবর্তনের মূল কথা হচ্ছেঃ স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণ গ্রামীণ অর্থ-নীতির স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণতার বিনাশ, আমদানী ও রপ্তানীর সূত্রে বিশ্বের ধনতন্ত্রের সঙ্গে সামন্ততান্ত্রিক বাঙালীর যোগাযোগ স্থাপন, পণ্যবিনিময়ের আধিক চেতনার বদলে নগদমূল্যে পণ্য কেনা-বেচার অর্বাচীন চেতনার প্রকাশ। দ্বিতীয়তঃ ইংরেজ রাজত্বের নতুন আধিক বিধিব্যবস্থায় জমি-নির্ভর উপস্থবভোগী, সরকারী কর্মচারী ও শিক্ষিত ভদ্রলোকদের নিয়ে একটা মহাবিস্ত্র শ্রেণী



POET WITH HIS DISCIPLES
(1913)

শিষ্যগণসহ রবীন্দ্রনাথ - ১৯১৩

(পিছনের সারিতে দণ্ডায়মান : চারুচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, দ্বিজেন্দ্র নাথ বসু, মণিলাল গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, প্রভাত কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায় । উপবিষ্ট : করুণানিগম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, স্বতন্ত্রমোহন বাগচী, সত্যেন্দ্র নাথ দত্ত)



IN ENGLAND (1912)

ইংলণ্ডে - (১৯১২)

(রথেনষ্টাইন, মুকুমার রায় ও কেশরনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায় সহ)

সাহিত্যের দিগন্তে দৃষ্টিপাত করলে দেখতে পাই, উনিশ শতকের প্রথম পঁচিশ বছর ছিলো প্রস্তুতি ও পরীক্ষার যুগ।

উনিশ শতকের বাঙালীর রাষ্ট্রচিন্তাও এখানে স্মরণীয়।

פ

শতাব্দীর পঞ্চমাব্দে বামখোপাল ঘোষ, তারচাঁদ চক্রবর্তী, জড়
মিসন ইত্যাদির রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতাবোধ ও জাতীয় রাজনৈতিক
চেতনা সৃষ্টিতে চেষ্টা দেখা যায়। কিন্তু তা সত্ত্বেও রামমোহন থেকে
শুরু করে তখনকার শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তিরা ভারতীয় ইংরেজ রাজত্বকে
ভবিষ্যৎ সুখসুখ্দির উপায় রূপে গ্রহণ করার যে মনোভাব
দেখিয়েছেন, শতাব্দীর মনোভাব পর্যন্ত সেই মনোভাবের বিশেষ
কোন পরিবর্তন ঘটেনি। কোম্পানীর মসনদের বার বার পরি-
বর্তনের ইতিহাস থেকে শুধু এইটুকু জানা যায় যে, শিক্ষিত
মহাদিওরা কিছু কিছু আন্দোলন করতে শিখেছে, প্রশাসনিক
ভালো-মন্দ বিচারের দিকে দৃষ্টি দিতে শুরু করেছে।
তবে ইতিমধ্যে যা কিছু ক্ষেত্র ও অঙ্গভঙ্গি সঞ্চিত হয় তা রাজ-
নৈতিক আন্দোলনের আকারে প্রথম সাত্তাল বিদ্রোহ
(১৮৫৭-৫৮) তারপর সিপাহী বিদ্রোহ (১৮৫৭), নীলবিদ্রোহ
(১৮৫৮-৬০) ইত্যাদির মধ্য দিয়ে আত্মপ্রকাশ করতে থাকে।
এরপর ঠাকুরবাড়ির পৃষ্ঠপোষকতায়, গণেশনাথ ঠাকুরের
অর্থসাহায্যে, রাজনারায়ণ বসুর উৎসাহে ও মনমোহন মিত্রের
নায়কত্বে যে হিন্দুমেলায় উদ্ভব, তাতেই প্রথম স্বদেশী দ্রব্য ও শিল্প
প্রীতি পায়। কিছুকাল পরবর্তী রাজনৈতিক প্রতিষ্ঠান সুরেন-
নাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের ইণ্ডিয়ান এসোসিয়েশানের (১৮৭৬) কথাও
এখানে উল্লেখ করা যায়। মনে স্পষ্টভাবে স্বাধীন স্বপ্ন লালন করতে
আরম্ভ করেছে। সেই প্রত্যাশার মধ্যে এক দিকে যেমন ছিল
ইংরেজের প্রতি বিরুদ্ধতা, আর এক দিকে তেমনি ইংরেজ-চরিত্রের
প্রতি অসম্মানও আছে। কেবলমাত্র মনুষ্যত্বের দোহাই দিয়ে ভারতের
শাসন-কর্ত্ত্বকে ইংরেজের শরিক হতেও পারি এমন কথা মনে
করা যে সম্ভব হয়েছিল, সেই জোর কোথা থেকে পেয়েছিলাম।
অথচ জীবনের প্রারম্ভে নবীন্দ্রনাথের কাছে ইংরেজরা দেখা
দিয়েছিলো 'মধ্য যুরোপের চিত্তপ্রতীকরূপে।' তারা ছিলো
ন্যায়ময় ও মনুষ্যত্বের আদর্শ। এমনিতর ইংরেজের সম্পর্কে
নবীন্দ্রনাথের মনে হলো—'এই যুগ যুরোপের সঙ্গে আমাদের
প্রভীর সহযোগিতারই যুগ।' দেশের ইতিহাসের দিকে তাকিয়ে
তিনি দেখতে পেলেন—'যুরোপের চিত্তের জন্মশক্তি আমাদের

স্থানর মনের উপর আঘাত করল, যেমন দূর থেকে আঘাত করে
বৃষ্টিবারা মান্নির পত্রে। ভূমিতলের নিশ্চেষ্ট অস্তরের মধ্যে প্রবেশ
করে প্রাণের চেষ্টা সফল করে দেয়, সেই চেষ্টা বিচিত্ররূপে
অঙ্কুরিত বিকশিত হতে থাকে।' একদা রেনেসাঁয়ের চিত্তবোধ
ইটালি থেকে উদ্ভব হয়ে সমস্ত যুরোপে যেমন ছড়িয়ে পড়েছিলো,
তেমনি ইংরেজ রাজত্ব রেনেসাঁয়ী ভাবধারা বাঙলা দেশে পরি-
বাস্তব হয়, একথাও আমরা নবীন্দ্রনাথের মুখে শুনেছি। এখন
প্রশ্ন হচ্ছে, উনিশ শতকে রেনেসাঁয়ের কালে যুরোপের কাছ থেকে
আমরা কি পেয়েছি? নবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—'মানুষের মূল্য,
মানুষের শ্রেয়ত্বতা হঠাৎ এত আশ্চর্য বড়ো হয়ে দেখা দিল কোন
শিক্ষায়। অথচ আমাদের নিজেদের পরিবারে প্রতিবেশে, পাড়ার
সমাজে, মানুষের নাজিগত স্নাত্ত্ব বা সম্মানের দাবি, শ্রেণী
বিচারে ন্যায়ময়ত্ব ব্যবহারের সমান অধিকারত্ব এখনো সম্পূর্ণ-
ভাবে আমাদের চরিত্রে প্রবেশ করতে পারেনি। তা হোক
আচরণে পতি পদে পদে প্রতিবাদসত্ত্বেও যুরোপের প্ৰভাব অদ্বৈত
হয়ে আমাদের মনে কাজ করেছে। বৈজ্ঞানিক বুদ্ধি সম্বন্ধেও
দিক সেই একই কথা। পাঠশালার পথ দিয়ে বিজ্ঞান এসেছে
আমাদের দ্বারে, কিন্তু ঘরের মধ্যে পাঁজিপুঁথি এখনো তার সম্পূর্ণ
দখল ছাড়েনি। তবু যুরোপের বিদ্যা প্রতিবাদের মধ্য দিয়েও
আমাদের মনের মধ্যে সম্মান পাচ্ছে।'

এই হচ্ছে নবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টিতে বাঙলার রেনেসাঁয়ের রূপ।
কবির চিন্তায় ও উপলব্ধিতে তার প্রভাব ও ক্রিয়া অব্যাবহিত ও
ব্যাপক। তিনি তাঁর জীবন ও সাহিত্যে রেনেসাঁয়ের ভাবধারাকে
আমরণ বহন করে গিয়েছেন, দিয়ে গিয়েছেন তার সাধন-
পরিণতি। তাই দেখতে পাই, আদি বুদ্ধসমাজের আবহাওয়ায়,
হিন্দুমেলায় প্রাথমিক উচ্চারণ করে, স্বদেশী আন্দোলন ও শিল্পী
উৎসবের পথ বেয়ে তাঁর চিত্ত ও চিন্তার বিবর্তন ঘটেছে, তাঁর মনেন্দ
মুক্ত হয়েছে বিশৃঙ্খলিততার উদার ক্ষেত্রে; সাম্প্রদায়িক বন্-
বুদ্ধিকে তিনি রূপান্তরিত করেছেন এক প্রত্যয়সিদ্ধ অনভূতিবোধ
সত্যবোধে; আভিজাত্যপ্রসূত 'সম্মানের চিরনির্দাসন' থেকে তাঁর
আত্মোদ্ধার হয়েছে ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সাধনপীঠে।

সূর্য ও নবীন্দ্রনাথ

কোনো প্রত্যয় নেই, নিখারিত অমন মণ্ডলে
জ্যোৎস্ব শলাখ মত বরিত্রীর নিরবধি বেগ,
অথবা বায়বাসিত প্রধাবিত ললিতিকা-মেঘ
সূর্য নিয়ন্ত্রনাধীনে-যেন তার ইচ্ছার শৃঙ্খলে।
বন্ধন-উত্তীর্ণ লিপ্সা কখনো স্বাধীন সত্তা বোঝে
গুনো আফালনে মন্ত হঠকারিতার আলোড়নে,
তবু সব বার্থ চেষ্টা, দুর্নিবার যে-মাধ্যাকর্ষণে,
বস্তুত সূর্যই বাণী প্রারম্ভিক পাখির ষড়্জে।

সূর্য-কবিতা এই নদী গিরি ভূবর অন্ধুর
আকাশ প্রাপ্তর ক্ষেত, সূর্য ও সন্ধ্যা বিভাসিত
পাঠায় উপন্যাসকন রোদ্র তার পৃথিবী-বন্দিত।
সকালে সঙ্গীত, রাতে হৈমন্তিক স্বপ্নল কোমলী।
এই সূর্য চক্রাতপ থেকে দূরে অন্যত্র নিভতে
অবস্থান অগ্রগতি—সেতো মৃত্যু সূর্যতীন শীতে ॥

—বীরেন্দ্রকুমার গুপ্ত

রবীন্দ্রনাথের কর্মসাধনা

সমীক্ষণ চট্টোপাধ্যায়



রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৃষ্টি অতি বিচিত্র এবং সবত্রগামী না হলেও বহুপথগামী, একথা সবিসময়ে সর্বজনে স্বীকার করেন। কবিতা, উপন্যাস, নাটক, ছোটগল্প, হাস্যকৌতুক, প্রবন্ধ, বর্মচিন্তা, সমাজচিন্তা, সঙ্গীত ও স্তরবৈচিত্র্য, এত অধিক পরিমাণে এবং এমন মর্মস্পর্শী করে দান করেছেন যে মানব ইতিহাসে তিনি স্বর্ণাঙ্কিত হয়ে গেছেন। এর সঙ্গে পরিণত বয়সে মনের অব-চেতনাকে তুলি ও রঙের ব্যবহারে এমন মনুনে ভঙ্গীতে প্রকাশ করেছেন যে তাঁর চিত্রাবলী শিল্পজগতে বিশেষ স্থান অধিকার করে বসেছে। কোনো বিষয়বস্তুকে রঙে রূপে প্রকাশ করব বলে তিনি চিত্রসৃষ্টি করেছেন তা মনে হয়না। মনে হয়, যে-জীবনানুভূতি যে-বেদনা তাঁর কবিতা গানে কুঁটে উঠেছে, তারই নিরুদ্ধেশ্য রঙিন প্রকাশ হল তাঁর চিত্রে। সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত, স্তর একটি জন্মের মধ্যে অভূতপূর্ণ, তার উপর চিত্রের নবরূপ এবং নবীন প্রকাশ-ভঙ্গী। জগৎবাসী বিস্মিত প্রণত হবে নৈ কি!

বিচিত্র এবং গভীর তাঁর এই সৃষ্টি—তাঁর সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত, স্তর ও চিত্রাবলী। মনকে বিস্ময়ে অভিভূত করে ফেলেছে। আমরা জনসাধারণ, এমন কি আমাদের মধ্যে যারা সঙ্গীত জ্ঞানী বিচারক তাঁরাও, রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার এই সৃষ্টিকেই প্রায় একমাত্র করে বুঝেছি। রবীন্দ্র-প্রভাব মনের চোখে যেন ধাঁধা লেগে গেছে। সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত, স্তর এবং চিত্রাবলী ছাড়া রবীন্দ্র-নাথের অপর কোনো সৃষ্টি আমাদের মনের চোখ দেখতেই পায়না। খুব সত্যক এবং খোলা মনে আমরা যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথকে সমগ্রভাবে বুঝে নিতে চাই, তখনো মন বারো বারে ফিরে আসে তাঁর সঙ্গীত-স্তরে, তাঁর কাব্যে। তাঁর প্রবন্ধের বিচার করি ভাষার সাফল্যে এবং ত্বের ওজনে। অন্য কোনো ভূমিকা যে তাঁর প্রবন্ধটির আছে, অন্য কোনো ভূমিকায় তাঁর বর্মচিন্তা সমাজচিন্তা ভাষণ কর্মোপেক্ষণ প্রভৃতির অর্থ ও তাৎপর্য ভাষা এবং ত্ব ছাড়াও যে বিশেষ হয়ে উঠতে পারে সে সম্ভাবনামি ও আভাল হয়ে যায়। তার ফল হয় এই যে, আমরা যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথকে সমগ্রভাবে দেখেছি মনে করি তখন তাঁর জীবনের অনুভূতির একটি বিশেষ দিক বাদ থেকেই যায়, তাঁর সৃষ্টির একটি জাতীয় রূপক ধরা পড়েনি। আমাদের অপরাধ নেই, তাঁর সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত-স্তর এবং চিত্রাবলী এমনই যে তাকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের একমাত্র এবং সামগ্রিক পরিচয় বলে বোধ হতে পারে। তবে শতাব্দিক উৎসবের দিনে তাঁর সৃষ্টির অন্য দিকটি যেন আমরা না ভুলি বা লম্বু করে না দেখি।

সমগ্র রবীন্দ্র প্রতিভার দ্বিতীয় বা অপেক্ষাকৃত অপ্রত্যক্ষ দিকটির কী নাম দেওয়া যেতে পারে সোটাও একটা সমস্যা। সাধারণ ভাষায় কর্ম, কর্মকাণ্ড, কর্মজীবন, কর্মসাধনা প্রভৃতি ব্যবহৃত হয়। এই সুপ্রচলিত শব্দগুলির যে-কোনো একটি নিয়ে

খালোচা দিকে ইঙ্গিত দেওয়া যেতে পারে। তাঁর শাস্তিনিকেতন, শ্রীনিকেতন, তথা বিশ্বভারতী তাঁর প্রতিভার এই দিকের প্রকাশ পরিচয়। কাব্যের ঝঙ্কারে, সঙ্গীতের স্তরে, চিত্রের রঙে রূপে তাঁর প্রতিভা কেন্দ্রীভূত হয়ে নিঃশেষ হয়ে যায়নি, তাঁর কর্মসাধনার বিরতি পরিচয় রয়ে গেছে শাস্তিনিকেতনে এবং পরিণত বয়সের সৃষ্টি শ্রীনিকেতনে। এই প্রতিষ্ঠান যখন তাঁর চিন্তা কল্পনা আশা আশঙ্কার বাহ্য রূপ গ্রহণ করল তখন থেকে শৈশব যবস্থা উদ্ভীর্ণ করে দেওয়া পর্যন্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথের কী অপরিণাম এম। প্রতিটি পুঁটিনাটিও প্রথম প্রথম তাঁকে দেখে দিতে হয়েছে, বলে দিতে হয়েছে। তবে, যেখানে নিয়ম-চক্র এসে গিয়েছে সেখানে তাঁর কর্মীরা ভার নিয়েছেন, তখন মনুনে কোনো সৃষ্টির কর্মসাধনায় হাত দিয়েছেন কবি। কবির দায়িত্ব তখন হল মনুনে কর্মসৃষ্টি এবং নিয়মকানূনের দ্বারা সৃষ্টিবর্ম যেন ধাবত না হয়ে পড়ে তারই আরোহণ-প্রয়োজন শিক্ষণ প্রভৃতি। কবি নিজেই বলেছেন শাস্তিনিকেতন-শ্রীনিকেতনের কর্মকাণ্ডে যে-অংশ সৃষ্টি সে-অংশ তাঁর নিজেই এবং যে-অংশ প্রাত্যহিকতার নিয়মকানুন মাপ-জোপ সে অংশ তাঁর কর্মীদের অনেকের। তাঁর দায়িত্ব নিয়মানুবৃত্তির দিকে নয়, সৃষ্টির দিকে, সৃষ্টিবর্ম যেন নিয়ম-যন্ত্রে পর্বনসিত না হয় সেই দিকে। তাঁর কর্মসাধনা এবং কবি-সৃষ্টি মূলতঃ স্বতন্ত্র নয়; কর্মের কঠোর শ্রমে অবতীর্ণ হয়েও তাঁকে কাব্য সঙ্গীত স্তর রঙ রূপ হারাতে হয়নি তার প্রধান কারণ এই। তাঁর কর্ম, তাঁর শাস্তিনিকেতন ও শ্রীনিকেতন, তাঁর সৃষ্টি-অভাবেরই অভিব্যক্তি, তাঁর কাব্য সঙ্গীত স্তর রঙ রূপের সম্পূর্ণ, অপ্রমায় নয়। কবির সৃষ্টি-প্রতিভার নিদর্শন যেমন তাঁর সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত, স্তর চিত্র, তেমনি সার্থক নিদর্শন তাঁর শাস্তিনিকেতন, শ্রীনিকেতন, বিশ্ব-ভারতী এবং তার পুঁটিনাটি প্রচেষ্টা।

পরিণত বয়সে তিনি শাস্তিনিকেতনের অদূরে কতকগুলি গ্রামের মধ্যবর্তী প্রান্তরে পুরাতন বাড়ীতে শ্রীনিকেতনের পল্লী-পুনর্গঠনের কাজ শুরু করলেন। শ্রীনিকেতন যে তাঁর পরিণত চিন্তার কর্মরূপ সে-কথা পরিষ্কার করে বলেছেন তিনি এল, কে, এলম্বাঙ্গি সাহেবকে লিখিত তাঁর পত্রে। পরিণত বয়সের কর্মসাধনা হলেও শ্রীনিকেতনের মানসিক জন্ম অল্প দিনের নয়—বছ দিন আগে কবির যৌবনেই শ্রীনিকেতনের সম্ভাবনা চেনা গিয়েছিল। বিপ্লব ঘটবার অনেক আগে থেকেই আরোহণ-প্রয়োজন আয়গোপন করে থাকে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের শ্রীনিকেতন, তাঁর পল্লী-পুনর্গঠনের প্রয়াস, তখনকার জাতীয় ভূমিকায় যে বৈপ্লবিক ঘটনা সে-বিষয়ে দ্বিমত হবার কারণ নেই। শ্রীনিকেতনের বৈপ্লবিক আবির্ভাবের বেশ কয়েকবৎসর আগেই কবির চিত্তে এর প্রয়োজন ক্রমশঃই প্রতিফলিত হচ্ছিল, ক্রমশঃই আরোহণ

স্পষ্টতর হয়ে উঠেছিল। শেষে ১৯২২ সালে কর্মরূপে প্রকাশ পেল, পল্লীপুনর্গঠনের কাজ আরম্ভ হল প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বের প্রচেষ্টায়, ব্যক্তিগত প্রয়াসের সীমা পার হয়ে। যারা সমাজ-বিজ্ঞানী, তারা বলে দেন যে ব্যক্তিগত প্রয়াসকে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করার মূল্য ক'তখানি, ক'তখানি নিরপেক্ষ বোধ এবং আত্ম-প্রতি আশ্রয়ের প্রয়োজন হয় এই ব্যক্তিগত প্রয়াসের গভীর পার হয়ে। সে কথা যাক। এইটুকু বলবার, যে-১৮৫৬ শাস্তিনিকেতনের প্রয়োজন ছেপেছিল, 'আয়োজন' চলেছিল, সেই কবি-চিহ্নেই শ্রীমিকেতনের প্রয়োজন অনুভূত হয়েছিল, আয়োজন যথাগত ভাবে দেখতে হবে। শাস্তিনিকেতনকে সমগ্রভাবে জানতে গেলে শ্রীমিকেতনের ভূমিকা বুঝে নিতে হবে, শ্রীমিকেতনকে সমগ্ররূপে বুঝতে গেলে শাস্তিনিকেতনের ভাবধারা হৃদয়ঙ্গম করতে হবে।

শাস্তিনিকেতনের এবং শ্রীমিকেতনের পল্লীপুনর্গঠনের দায়িত্ব অসম্পন্ন করে বুঝবার প্রয়োজন ক'তখানি তা ভাষান্তরে কবি নিজেই প্রত্যক্ষভাবে বলে গিয়েছেন। তিনি বলেছেন যে তাঁর সেই সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্র পল্লীগ্রামের মূলধারা থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে পড়লে ব্যর্থ হয়ে পড়বে, নিকাশিত পল্লী-গ্রামের আর্থিক ও বৈষয়িক জীবনের সঙ্গে তাঁর সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্রের মূল যোগ রক্ষা করতেই হবে, তাঁর বিশ্বভারতীতে যেইজন্য বৈজ্ঞানিক পদ্ধতি অবলম্বনে চাষ-পো-পালন এবং অন্যান্য জীবন-প্রয়োজনের পরীক্ষা এবং প্রচেষ্টা চলবে, ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের প্রয়োজন মেনেই হবে যথাযথ বিশ্বভারতীর নিজের কর্মপ্রচেষ্টার দ্বারা। এসব না হলে সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্ররূপে আর্থিকতা দাবী করা চলবে না। রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই সত্যকবানী বিশ্বভারতীর পক্ষে 'অনুপূরার মূল স্তরের মত। এটি তাঁর মনোভঙ্গীর একটি বিশেষ নির্দেশক। শাস্তিনিকেতন বা শ্রীমিকেতন সত্তর ভাবে যে সাংস্কৃতিক মত বুঝতে গেলে, সমগ্রভাবে বুঝতে গেলে, সব দিক একত্র করে মিলিয়ে অসম্পন্ন করে বুঝতে হবে, এইটাই যেন স্পষ্ট বলে মনে হচ্ছে। শ্রীমিকেতনের কর্ম-প্রচেষ্টার দ্বারা বিচ্ছিন্ন, কৃষি, গোপালন, শিল্প, স্বাস্থ্য, তথ্য-গ্রহণ, শিক্ষা, সমগ্র্য ভিত্তিতে পল্লীগ্রামের বৈষয়িক উন্নতির সাপেক্ষে প্রভৃতি কত কর্ম-বিভাগ আছে। সেগুলির প্রত্যেকটি এখন অবশ্য সব ভারতীয় পল্লী-গ্রামের কর্মসূচীতে নানাভাবে প্রতিফলিত। এটি আশার কথা হলেও রবীন্দ্রনাথের সামগ্রিক মনোভঙ্গী অনুভব করার বিষয়ে প্রয়োজনীয় নয়। প্রয়োজন হল এই যে, পল্লীপুনর্গঠনের বড় বিভাগ থাকলেও সবকয়টি কর্মপন্থার এক করে দেখতে হবে, স্বতন্ত্র করে দেখলে সমগ্র জীবন-ধারাটি অসম্পন্ন থেকে যাবে। শ্রীমিকেতনের সঙ্গে শাস্তিনিকেতনকে। অসম্পন্ন ভাবে দেখতে পারলে যেমন রবীন্দ্রনাথের কর্মসাধনার স্বরূপ বোঝা সম্ভব হতে পারে, তেমনি শ্রীমিকেতনের প্রয়াসের বড় ধারাকে একত্র করে বুঝতে পারলে তবে রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরিণত বয়সের সৃষ্টি এই শ্রীমিকেতনের গাঠনিক রূপটি ধরা সম্ভব হবে।

অবাস্তব মনে হলেও কবির জীবনের দু'চারটি ঘটনার উল্লেখ করা যেতে পারে। সেগুলি দৃষ্টান্ত-স্বরূপ। দেখা যাবে, যে-অনুভূতি তাঁর কাব্যে সর্বোচ্চ রূপ পেয়েছে, সেই অনুভূতিই কর্মধারায় প্রতিফলিত হচ্ছে, শ্রীমিকেতনের বহুবিধ প্রয়াসে সেই অনুভূতি-অভিহিত্যই যেন কাজ করেছে। ইতিহাসের বৃন্দাবন ওশে সময়ের পারস্পর্য বিচার করতে গেলে এটি যে সব সময় ধরা পড়বে তা নয় : মানের গহনে কোন অনুভূতি কোন অভিজ্ঞতা কী

রূপের আয়োজন করেছে তা সঙ্গীশীল কবিই জানেন না—এতো তাঁর আত্ম-পরিচয়ে অন্তর্লীন্য ভাবে ও ভাষায় বলাই আছে। বাইরের দিক থেকে বৃন্দাবন হিসাবে তা কার্যকারণ জানা যাবে কী ভাবে। যে রসে কাণ্ড পুষ্ট হচ্ছে, সেই মূল রসের বৈচিত্র্য-সাধন চলেছে শাখায় প্রশাখায় পাতায় ফলে ফলে। কবির মূল জীবনানুভূতিই কোথাও ফুটে উঠছে কাব্যে, কোথাও স্তরে, কোথাও চিত্রে : কখনো বৃদ্ধির প্রথম প্রায় তাঁর হয়ে উঠছে, কখনো জ্ঞানের সাধনায় উদ্ভূত করে, কোথাও পল্লীর ভূমিকায় সার্থক হচ্ছে। 'আলাপাচারী রবীন্দ্রনাথ' কবি নিজেই বলছেন সামান্য গভীর মেহলেহনের মতো 'ভাচ্ছ ধনি'ও পরে মধুর গভীর কাব্যে উদ্ভূত হয়েছে, চেনা শব্দ বটে তবু চেনা যায়।

বামাচরণ বড় খুব কড়া মানোজার। তারিণী শিকদার (কর্মদার) জমিদার রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রজা। তারিণী শিকদার নাকি এমন কিছু করেছিল যাতে বড় প্রজার সামনে জমিদার সরকারের সামনে খুব অপমানিত হয়েছিল। অতএব শাসন-বান্ধা-বোঝে চুটে এল তারিণীর উপর : তারিণী চুটে এসে পড়ল রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাছে। জমিদার রবীন্দ্রনাথ মানোজার-আমিনদের ডেকে ভাৎসনা করে সতর্ক করে দিলেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য হল জমিদার এবং কর্মচারীদের যেমন মান আছে, তেমনি মান-সম্মান আছে প্রজার। প্রজা বোকা হলেও তাকে বুঝিয়ে দিতে হবে, বুঝিয়ে দেবার দায়িত্ব কর্মচারীদের প্রজার মানসে কোন আঘাত করা চলবে না, তাতে জমিদারেরই অপমান।

জমিদার রবীন্দ্রনাথ খুব খুব প্রান্তরের মধ্য দিয়ে চলেছেন। কাম্বল-চৈত্রনাথের দুপুর-বেলা। দুপুর থেকে কে যেন চুটে আসছে মাঠের মধ্য দিয়ে হোঁচকি খেতে খেতে, আর বলাতে পাখী খামাও। পাখীর বেহারা চলেইছে, খামাও না, লোকটিও পিছন পিছন চুটেছে। অবশেষে রবীন্দ্রনাথের হুকুমে পাখী খামল, লোকটিও চুটে এসে দাঁড়াল। তারপর কাপড়ের খুঁটি থেকে একটা টিকা বের করে বিনীতভাবে মজরানা রাখল। বিগমিত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ফেরৎ দিতে গেলেন, কিন্তু অপমান-অভিমানের নালিশ কণ্ঠে নিয়ে লোকটি প্রণাম সেরে চলে গেল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিম্বল চিত্তে তার দিকে চেয়ে রইলেন।

রসিক পেয়াদা নিজেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের সেবক বলে মনে করত; অনেক সময় সম্মানীয় বেশে থাকত আর রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান করত। একদিন রবীন্দ্রনাথের নজর পড়ল তাঁর উপর : কাছে ডেকে জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন দু'একটি কথা। রসিক এই অভাবনীয় ঘটনায় উৎসাহ পেয়ে 'অনর্গল' কথা বলে চলল, তাঁর ঘরসংসারের কথা, তাঁর ঠাকুর-ভক্তির কথা আরো কত কী। অবশেষে তাঁর প্রায়াসে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান শুনিতে তবু চাঙল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ আদৌ বিরক্ত হলেন না, বরং মনোযোগ দিয়ে তাঁর গান শুনলেন, অনেকক্ষণ ধরে শুনলেন। তাঁর গানের পিছনে প্রাণিক যেমন অনুভব করলেন এবং যাতে তাঁর অভাবের চাপে গান না খামে তাঁর জন্য ভাল জমি কিছু তাকে দান করলেন।

একদিন কালিম্পং পাহাড়ে কবির কাছে এসেছিলেন কয়েকজন মহিলা। তাঁরা সকলেই গৃহিনী, একথা-সেকথার পর আরম্ভ হয়ে গেল তরবারি রামার কথা—বড়ি, গজনের ডাঁটা, স্বস্তি প্রভৃতি। কখন কী ভাবে যে এসব কথা এসে পড়ল বোঝা গেলনা প্রবন্ধলেখক সেখানে সমস্তফণ্ট উপস্থিত ছিলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথ যোগসাহেব রন্ধন-বর্ণনা শুনছেন, শুধু শুনছেন না, নিজেও মাঝে মাঝে যোগ দিচ্ছেন।

এই রকম ঘটনা দু-চারটে নয়, বহু। এগুলি কবি-প্রতিভা-দীপ্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথকে নিকট করে তোলে, ঘরোয়া জীবনের মধ্যে তাঁর স্বভাবের কিছুটা আলোকিত হয়। যারা কাছে আসে তারা তাঁকে নিকট করে পায়, আর রবীন্দ্রনাথ লাভ করেন এই সব ছোট-খাটো ঘটনার মধ্যে বিশেষ দৃষ্টি, জন-জীবনের অনুভূতি। বোকা তারিণী শিকদার, নিরীহ সরল-বিশ্বাসী প্রজার নজরানা, রসিকের প্রাণ্য ভক্তি-সদ্বীত, মহিলাদের স্বামীপুত্রদের পরিতৃপ্ত করে খাওয়াবার আকাঙ্ক্ষা, কিছুই তাঁর কাছে তুচ্ছ নয়; প্রতিটি ঘটনাই বাতায়নের মতো খুলে ধরেছে তাঁর সামনে বিরূপ প্রাণ-প্রবাহ, গভীর গ্রামীণ জীবন-সংস্কৃতি। কোনো ঘটনা তাঁর মনে একক হয়ে সত্ত্ব হয়ে ওঠেনি; সব-গুলি মিলে পূর্বপরিচিত গ্রামীণতার একটি সামগ্রিক রূপ-সৃষ্টি করেছিল তাঁর কল্পনায়। অতি মধুর সে কল্পনা, অতি ব্যাপক সে কল্পনা। এদের প্রতি, তারিণী-রসিক-নিরীহদের প্রতি তাঁর মনে ভাণ্ডে শ্রদ্ধার ভাব, বড় লোকের দয়ার ভাব নয়, একটা ব্যক্তি-নিরপেক্ষ সত্য যেন প্রতিভাত হয়, কোনো ব্যক্তিগত ভাবাবেগ নয়। ছিন্নপত্রে (১৬) তিনি লিখছেন, 'এদের উপর যে আমার কতখানি শ্রদ্ধা হয়, আপনাদের চেয়ে যে এদের কতখানি ভাল মনে হয়, তা এরা জানে না।' এদের দয়া করতে গেলে অপমান করা হয়, অতএব এদের নিজেদের শক্তিতেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে। এই হল তাঁর বিশ্বাস। তিনি বললেন মরুভূমির ভিতরই থাকে মরু-উদ্যানের রসশক্তি। যাদের উদ্দেশ্যে তিনি ছিন্নপত্রে শ্রদ্ধা জ্ঞাপন করলেন, তাদের মধ্যেই গোপন আছে মহৎ শক্তি। প্রয়োজন শুধু সেইটুকু আবিষ্কারের এবং সেইগুলি সমবায়ের শক্তিতে পরিণত করার—এ চিন্তা তিনি পকাশ করেছেন বহুবার, শ্রীমদেকতনের শিল্পভাণ্ডারের (কলিকাতায়) উদ্বোধনের সময় ভাষণে পুনরুক্তি করেছিলেন তিনি; তখন জোর দিয়েছেন এদের নিজেদের শক্তির উপর, এদের সমবায়ের উপর। এ-বিশ্বাসের মূল ছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথের শ্রদ্ধার গভীর মনোভাব; কর্মক্ষেত্রে প্রতিফলিত হল শ্রীমদেকতনের কর্মসূচীর মধ্যে—সমবায় স্বাস্থ্যকেন্দ্র, সমবায় শিল্পকেন্দ্র, সমবায় ঋণ-গ্রহণ সমিতি, শিল্পভবন, পল্লী-মহিলা-সূচীশিল্প সমবায় জাতীয় বহু কর্মোদ্যোগ। তাঁর সাংস্কৃতিক কেন্দ্রে তা অর্থনৈতিক প্রচেষ্টা থেকে দূরে থাকলে বার্থ হবে, তিনি তা বলেইছেন। শ্রীমদেকতনের উদ্যমে যেমন রূপ নিল তাঁর শ্রদ্ধা তাঁর বিশ্বাস, তেমনি ছাত্র-কর্মীদের কাছে শোনা গেল গান 'সব কাজে হাত লাগাই মোরা' 'আমরা চাষ করি আনন্দে' 'সঙ্কোচের বিহীনতা' 'ওরে নূতন যুগের ভোরে' আরো কত। এদের অপমানে ফেলে রাখলে শেষে অপমানে হতে হবে তাদের সবার সমান—এই প্রচণ্ড সত্যক বাণী উচ্চারিত হল চন্দে চন্দে। সেই যে 'আলাপচারী রবীন্দ্রনাথ'-এ আছে তিনি বলেছিলেন যে ছোট তুচ্ছ ঘটনাই অনেক সময় ফল হয়ে ফলেছিল তাঁর সাহিত্যে, এ তো তাই। কার্য-কারণ যক্ষ্ম নয়, মূল অনুভূতির বিচিত্র প্রকাশের কথা—কোথাও গানে-কবিতায়, কোথাও কর্ম-সূচী-প্রণয়নে।

রসিকের প্রাণ্য ভক্তি-সদ্বীত মনোবোধ দিয়ে শোনা রবীন্দ্র-নাথের কোনো বিচ্ছিন্ন ঘটনা নয়। তিনি অজ্ঞাতপ্রায় লালন ফকিরের গানের জন্য কত অনুসন্ধান করেছেন, বাউলকে সসজ্জা ভেঁকে এনেছেন, পল্লীর গানকে সমাদরে গ্রহণ করে আনিয়েছেন শ্রীমদেকতনে। তাইতো দেখা যায় তাঁর বিশ্বভারতীতে তাঁর নিজের গান আছে, বেদমন্ত্র উচ্চারিত হয়, আবার অপূর্ণ অসাজিত

শব্দের লোকগীতিও সমাদৃত। শ্রীমদেকতনের লোকশিক্ষার প্রয়াসে স্থানীয় কবি মধুরী অভিনেতা কথকদের যথোচিত মর্যাদা ও স্বীকৃতি দানের যে ব্যবস্থা ছিল এবং অনেকখানি এখনো আছে, তার মূলে কোনো খেয়াল নেই, আছে যা একান্ত আমাদের সব জনের তাঁকে উপলব্ধির মহৎ যাকিন। 'লোকসাহিত্য' গ্রন্থে তিনি ছড়া গান কথা আকারে যে গ্রাম্য সাহিত্য আছে সে সম্পর্কে বলেছেন '... তাহাকে কাব্য হিসাবে গ্রহণ করিতে গেলে তাহার মধ্যে যত্ন মনে মনে সমস্ত গ্রাম সমস্ত লোকালয়কে জড়াইয়া লইয়া পাঠ করিতে হয়—তাহারাই ইহার ভাঙ্গা চন্দ এবং অপূর্ণ মিলকে অংশ ও পাশে ভরাটি করিয়া তোলে।' গ্রাম্য সাহিত্যের হর-গৌরী কথা সম্পর্কে বলেছেন 'সেই হরগৌরী কথায় আমাদের বাংলা দেশের একটা বড়ো মনের কথা আছে।' 'ছেলেভুলানো ছড়ার কোনো ছড়ার কথা বলিতে গিয়ে মহাকবি কালিদাসের শ্লোক উদ্ধৃত করেছেন! 'মানা তুচ্ছ, এমন কি ভদ্র আয়সে অচল হয়ে আসছে যে-সব ছড়া গান কথা, তাকেই এত গভীর ভাবে পেয়েছেন বলেই তাঁর কর্মসাধনায় তাদের স্থান স্থায়ী হয়ে রয়েছে শ্রীমদেকতনের লোকশিক্ষাবিহারে, আর প্রবেশ করেছে সাহিত্যের আসরে, তাঁর অনেক গানে মনেছে গ্রামীণ ভাবের সরল রস।

শিশুদের প্রতি তাঁর ভালবাসা স্পষ্টখাত। ছোটদের দেখেছেন তিনি আশ্রিতরে স্নেহের বিশ্রামের চোখে। দেখেছেন তাদের পাঁড়া, আর কিয়ে তাদের আনন্দ। তাদের পাঁড়া দেখে মনে হয়েছে 'ছোটো ছেলেরা কী অসহায়।' তাদের উপর পাঁড়ন দেবলে 'হঠাৎ মানুষের যেন একটা Ideal' এর উপর আঘাত লাগে।' (ছিন্নপত্র ২০) জীবনের অনুভূতি অভিজ্ঞতা Ideal একদিকে 'শিশু' 'শিশু ভোলানাথ' 'ছড়ার ছবি' ইত্যাদি সৃষ্টি করল; অন্যদিকে শিশুদের 'পাঠ ভবন' শিক্ষাক্ষেত্র সৃষ্টি হল শাস্তিনিকেতনে শ্রীমদেকতনে ছেলে-মেয়েদের মুক্ত পরিবেশে স্নেহের শায়নে যথাসময় শিক্ষা দেবার জন্যে। শুধু তাই নয়, গ্রামে গ্রামে কর্মীরা পেলেন ছোট ছোট ছেলে মেয়েদের স্কুলের পাঁচা খেকে মুক্ত বাতাসে ঢুকিয়ে খেলিয়ে গান-গাইয়ে তথা-সংগ্ৰহ করিয়ে সমবেত ভাবে কাজ করিয়ে শুশ্রূষা শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করতে। ছেলেমেয়েদের এই সব বিচিত্র শিক্ষার দলকে বলা হল 'বৃত্তিবালক' এদের প্রধান কেন্দ্র হল শ্রীমদেকতন। এদের গান হল 'একসূত্রে বাঁধা আছি' 'সব কাজে হাত লাগাই মোরা' আরো বহু। আর-একটি গান বোধহয় এদের উপযুক্ত 'আমরা লক্ষ্মীছাড়ার দল'!

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে সামগ্রিক জীবনানুভূতি লাভ করেছিলেন তা বড় মধুর ও বিরাট। কিন্তু জীবনের দুখে দারিদ্র্য দুর্বলতা ধ্রুপদী তাঁর নজরের বাইরে থেকে যায় নি। তিনি ছোট তুচ্ছ ঘটনার মধ্যে দিয়ে যে বিরাট সংস্কৃতি ও জীবনের আভাস লাভ করেছিলেন, তার মধ্যে দারিদ্র্য দুর্বলতা ধ্রুপদী নিত্যসুই বেহুলা বেছন্দ অশোভন কর্কশ নিষ্ঠুর অসংগতি বলে মনে হয়েছিল। যে পরিপূর্ণ জীবন চর্চির কল্পনা তাঁর চিত্তে সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল তার মধ্যে ওগুলির অস্তিত্ব অসম্ভব। তিনি কবি, তাঁর কবি-চিত্ত 'পরিপূর্ণতা'-কে ভালবাসতে, পরিপূর্ণতার ব্যাঘাত যা কিছু যদ্যপি তাঁর কবি-চিত্তে অসহ্য পাঁড়ার সৃষ্টি করত। এ কথা তিনি সংক্ষেপে বলেছেন 'আলাপ-আলোচনার মধ্যে—(আলাপচারী রবীন্দ্রনাথ)। দারিদ্র্য-ধ্রুপদী তাঁর পরিপূর্ণতার ব্যাঘাত, অতএব এগুলি দূর করার কাছে তাঁকে হাত দিতে হল, তিনি দূরে থাকতে পারলেন না।

তিনি সাহিত্যে তা যাহা ভাষ্যে তাই কাজ শেষ করিতে পারেন নি, তাই নিজের জীবনে নিজের পরিপূর্ণতা প্রেরণায় হাতে-গাড়ে কাজ করিতে হল, প্রতিদিন প্রভাতে ওলা। কাজ তাঁর অষ্ট-বমকে পরিপূর্ণতার আনন্দ দান করিছিল। কাজ করার আনন্দ তাকে পেয়ে বসেছিল। তিনি ছিয়াপদে (১৪৭) লিখছেন, যত বিচিত্র বসন্তের কাজ হাতে নির্মিত ততই কাজ জিনিসটির পথে আমার শঙ্কা বাড়ছে। কাজের মধ্য দিয়েই জিনিস চিনি, মানুষ চিনি, বসন্ত বসন্তের মতো মতো মূর্খামুখি পরিচয় ঘটে। যতাকে মূর্খামুখি পেতে গেলে কাজের পথনির্দেশ পলায়। কবি যাহার ভিতর দিয়ে ভুবনকে যতাকে নিরাকর করে পেয়েছেন, যাবার কাজের মধ্যস্থত নয় পরিচয় ফল। তাই যতই স্পর্শের পরিপূর্ণতা যাবার যাহা তা, অর, চিত্র এবং কাজের অসংখ্যতা।

শ্রীমদেকতন ও শাস্ত্রনিকেতন যেমন পরস্পরকে পরিপূর্ণতা দান করেছে, তেমনি কবির কর্মসাহসে তাঁর কাব্য, সঙ্গীত, অর, প্রবন্ধ ভাষণ, চিত্রাঙ্কন প্রভৃতি বিচিত্র সৃষ্টিকে পরিপূর্ণতা দান করেছে। তাঁর কর্মসাহসে কবির সামগ্রিক সৃষ্টি-ধর্মেরই আর এক দিক। এদিকটি বিশেষ করে বুঝে না দেখলে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে শতাব্দিক উৎসবেও খণ্ডিত মতো মত ভুল করে দেখা হবে। কর্মসাহসের দিকটি উপেক্ষা করলে বা লুপ্ত করলে দেশের ক্ষতি হবে, কারণ খণ্ডিত যত্ন নিয়ে বেশী দূর অগ্রসর হওয়া যায় না। ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত দিকটি যেমন, কবিকে সমগ্রভাবে না দেখলে তাঁর প্রতি অবিচার করার সম্ভাবনাও তেমন। তাঁর সাহিত্যের উজ্জ্বলতা মন যেমন আর্শিক-ভাবে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে না পড়ে।

— (৬)

৬. কবি

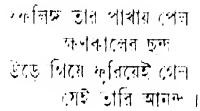
যে কবি সেখানে আমবা বিচ্যেব হয়েছি তাহা শুধু জীবন ভাষ্যের অঙ্গ নয়। আমবা জাই নায় ও যাহার উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত। এক স্বাধীন রাষ্ট্র আমবা জাই নাক নহে আমবা জাই নাক নহে। যাহা মনে মনে উঠবে তাহা মনে মনে উঠবে।

উল্লেখ্য। আপনি বিশৃঙ্খলতার শাস্ত্র হইতে আমাদের উদ্ধারিত জীবন যাত্রা-আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে রূপ দিয়েছেন। আপনি চিত্রকাল মুক্তাঙ্কন। যাহার-শীতল বানী কানায় আসুতেন। আপনি শুধু বাস্তবের বা শিরকলার ব্যক্তি নন। আপনার জীবনে কাব্য ও শিরকলা রূপ-পরিগ্রহ করেছে। আপনি বিশৃঙ্খল। আমাদের কবি যতই উচ্চতর হইবে, যে সমস্ত কথা, যে সমস্ত চিন্তা, যে সমস্ত ভাব আজ আমাদের অহুসে উল্লেখিত হয়ে উঠেছে—তা আপনি যেমন উপলব্ধি করবেন, তেমনি আরও করবেন। যে শুধু অনুধাবনের জন্য আজ আমবা সমস্তই হয়েছি তাঁর হাত। আপনি বাস্তব হইতে হইতে আমবা ন।

অন্যদিকে, আধুনিকতার এই চ্যালেঞ্জের মধ্যে আমবা আমবাকে সৌন্দর্যমিত্রের পদে বসব করে বসে উঠি। আপনার পবিত্র করকমলের দ্বারা 'মহাজাতি' পদার্থের প্রতি প্রতিবাদ। যে সমস্ত বসন্তের প্রচেষ্টা করে বাস্তব ও জাতিমুক্ত জীবনের আহ্বান পাঠে এবং বাস্তব ও জাতির সর্বাঙ্গীন উন্নতি সাধিত হবে—এই এই 'মহাজাতি' পদার্থেরই। 'মহাজাতি' সদস্য নাম যাহা বসন্তের ভুবুক এই আশীর্বাদ আপনি ককন। এই আশীর্বাদ ককন যেমন আমবা অবিরাম পরিচরিত আমাদের সমস্ত কথা, সমস্ত চিন্তা, সমস্ত ভাব আমবা আমবাকে সকল বসন্তে সাক্ষ্যমণ্ডিত ও জন্মদাতা করে উঠি।

—সুভাষ চন্দ্র বসু

মহাজাতি সদস্যের প্রতি আপন উপলক্ষ্য প্রদত্ত ভাষণ



এই পরিবর্তিত কাব্য-জিহ্বায়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের কোনো যে
মাত্র-মাত্রই প্রতিকলিত হলো, সেকথা বললে ভুল হবে। কিন্তু
তাঁর সেই পর্যায়ের বিশেষ এক ধরনের রচনাগোষ্ঠী এ পরিবর্তন

আভাসিত হয়ে উঠলো। ‘কণিকার’ কবিতা অনুবাদ করতে গিয়ে একটি চোপদাঁ কিরকম রূপান্তর লাভ করলো, পাশাপাশি দুটি উদাহরণ রাখলে সেকথা বোঝা সহজ হবে :

কুল কছে ফুকানিখা, ফল, ওরে ফল,
কত দূরে রয়েছে বসে মোরে বল।
ফল কছে, মহাশয়, কেন হাঁকাহাঁকি,
তোমারি অন্তরে আমি নিরন্তর থাকি।

—কুল ও ফল

“How far are you from me, O Fruit ?”
“I am hidden in your heart, O Flower”,
Stray Birds, 86.

দ্বিতীয় কবিতায় যে-ইচ্ছিতবসনিতা সঞ্চারিত হলো, যেটি প্রথম উৎফলনে ছিলো না। আবার, বাংলা দ্বিপদীতেও ঐ ইচ্ছিত-বসনিতা সঞ্চার করা যে আসন্ন হয়ে এলো, সফলত্বের একটি কবিতা উদ্ভূত করলেই আমরা তা দেখতে পাবো :

কুস্তম্ভেণ শোভা কুস্তম্ভের অবসানে
নববস হয়ে লুকায় ফলের প্রাণে।

এখানেও যে একটি ভাবার্থ নেই, তা নয়। কিন্তু সেই ভাবার্থ কবিতার পৌরসৌন্দর্য্যে আত্মরূপ করে নি, ‘সুতরাং’ এখানে যে-রস পাচ্ছি সেটি কাব্যরস।

Stray Birds এর প্রথম সংস্করণ বেরিয়েছে ১৯১৭-তে। এর উৎসর্গপত্র এ-সুদে একটি উল্লেখযোগ্য :

To T. Hara
of Yokohama

উৎসর্গ যাকে করা হয়েছে, তাঁর জীবন সম্পর্কে কোনো তথ্য যদি পাঠক না-ও জানেন, এটুকু নিশ্চয় লক্ষ্য করবেন, তিনি জাপানবাসী। আপাতের কবিতার আয়তনসংযম যে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে ক্রমশই আকর্ষণ করছিলো, নিম্নে উদ্ভূত বিবরণী তার প্রমাণ :

“সেপ্টেম্বর (১৯২১) মাসের রাতিবেলা রবীন্দ্রনাথ কয়েকটি ক্লাস নিয়েছিলেন জাপানী কবিতা পড়বার জন্য। ডিটস নগরের আলোয় ব’সে পড়াতেন ছাত্তর খোলা হাওয়ায়। আমরা মোট দশ বারো জনের বেশি নয়, তাকে ঘিরে ব’সে যেতাম। জাপানী ‘হাইকাই’ নামক ‘লিরিক এপ্রিগ্রাম’ কবিকে বিশেষভাবে মুগ্ধ করেছিল। কবিতাগুলি এক লাইন, দুলাইন, তিন লাইন বা চার লাইনের। তিনি এই জাতীর কবিতা পড়ে এমনই নিমিত্ত হয়েছিলেন যে তিনি যে কিম্বয় তিনি আমাদের মনে যতকন না সঞ্চারিত করতে পারতেন ‘ততকন তার তপ্তি নেই।’—রবীন্দ্রনাথ এগুলিকে বীজমন্ডের সঙ্গে তুলনা করেছিলেন মনে আছে। তিনি বলেছিলেন এই কবিতার জন্ম নিত্যস্থই কোঁতুহল থেকে, হঠাৎ কোঁতুহলে, উদ্দেশ্যমূলক নয়, একটি benevolent curiosity, কিন্তু তাবপর তুলির ভোঁয়া (কবিতা তুলিতেই লেখা) পাওয়া মাত্র তা profundity of sympathyহে, অর্থাৎ সেই কোঁতুহলে একটি অতি প্রভীর সংবেদনে রূপান্তরিত।

যেমন এক লাইনের হাইকাই—‘শাও বাহক চেরি ফল দেখতে পায় না।’

—সুহৃতিচরণ। পরিমল গোস্বামী।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের একটি হাইকাই এখানে তুলে দেওয়া যেতে পারে :

পথে হল ঢেরি, রাতে গেল ঢেরি
দিন বখা গেল, প্রিয়া।
তুও তোমার ক্ষমা হাসি বহি
দেখা দিল আজেলিয়া।

—লেখক

কিভাবে এই ধরনের লেখা শুরু করলেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেই তার ইতিহাস বলেছেন :

‘এই লেখনগুলি শুরু হয়েছিল চীনে জাপানে। পাখায় কাগছে রুমালে কিছু লিখে দেবার জন্যে লোকের অনুরোধে এর উৎপত্তি। তারপরে স্বদেশে ও অন্য দেশেও তাপিত পেয়েছি।’

—রচনাবলী সংস্করণ, ভূমিকা।

বিশদ করে অন্যত্র আরো বলেছেন :

‘যখন চীনে জাপানে গিয়েছিলেন প্রায় প্রতিদিনই স্বাক্ষরলিপির দাবি মেটাতে হত। এমনি করে যখন-তখন পথে-ঘাটে যেখানে-সেখানে দু-চারলাইন কবিতা লেখা আমার অভ্যাস হয়ে গিয়েছিল। এই লেখাতে আমি আনন্দও পেতুম। দু-চারটি বাক্যের মধ্যে এক-একটি ভাবকে নিবিষ্ট করে দিয়ে তার যে বাহুল্যবর্জিত রূপ প্রকাশ পেত তা আমার কাছে বড়ো লেখার চেয়ে অনেক গমর আরো বেশি আদর পেয়েছে। আমার নিজের বিশৃঙ্খল বড়ো বড়ো কবিতা পড়া আমাদের অভ্যাস বলেই কবিতার আয়তন কম হলে তাকে কবিতা বলে উপলব্ধি করতে আমাদের বাধে। আমাদের দেশে পাঠকদের মধ্যে আয়তনের উপাধিক অনেক আছে—সাহিত্য সংক্ষেপে তারা বলে, নাগে স্বখমন্তি—নাগি সংক্ষেপে তারা রাগি তিনটে পদ্য অভিনয় দেখার দ্বারা চিকিৎসা কেনার সাধকতা বিচার করে।’

—প্রবাসী, কালিক সংখ্যা, ১৩৩৫

তাইলে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই কবিতাবলীতে ভাবকে নিবিষ্ট করবার কথা বলেছেন, বিবৃত করার উপরজোর দেন নি। এবং স্বাক্ষর-কবিতা বলে এগুলির কাব্যমূল্য সংক্ষেপে যে আদৌ অন্যতর পোষণ করেন নি, তা থেকে একথা মনে করা সম্ভব, উপাত্ত্যপূর্বে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা-রচনার ক্ষেত্রে এই স্বাক্ষর-কবিতাগুলি একটা পরোক্ষ অথচ সক্রিয় প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে। এডগার অ্যালান পৌর মতো একান্ত এবং একাগ্রভাবে ছোটো কবিতার পক্ষ অবলম্বন করা রবীন্দ্রনাথের পক্ষে অসম্ভব ছিলো। কিন্তু ‘শেষ দিকে’ দীর্ঘ কবিতা রচনার প্রতি তাঁর একটা সচেতন বিন্মথতা এসে গিয়েছিল। তাঁর একাধিক কবিতায় তখন সৃষ্টির সংহতি এসেছে। একটি কবিতা :

আমার ছুটি আয়ছে কাছে সকল ছুটির শেষ,
ছবি একটি জাগছে মনে—ছুটির মহাদেশ।
আকাশ আছে শুক সোখায়, একটি গুরুর ধারা
অগাধ নীরবতার কানে বাজাচ্ছে একতারা।

—ছুটি, দৌড়তি।

একটি চিত্রকর এখানে আঁকা হয়েছে এবং সেই মুহূর্তেই কবিতামিহ্রও সমাপ্তি। এটুকু অতিরিক্ত নেই, অথচ একটি ভাবগ্রাম কি এখানে অসম্পূর্ণ রয়ে গেছে ?

রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাষায়, ‘অধিমাসিদ্ধি’ এই ধরনের কবিতা চারিত্র্যগুণ। রবীন্দ্রকব্যের সারাহুপরিধায়ে এই অনিমাসিদ্ধি এসেছিলো। স্বাক্ষর-কবিতাগুলি প্রথমে বাহিরের তাগিদে লেখা হলেও অবিলম্বে কবির আনন্দের অনুরোধে পরিণত হয়েছিল। এবং সেই কারণেই এদের রবীন্দ্রকাব্যধারার মূল শরীরের থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করলে অন্যায় হবে। সৃষ্টির মধ্যে যে-জীবনবোধ আছে, এই কবিতাগুলির অধিকাংশেই তা আছে। প্রিয়ম্বদা দেবী এদের এক-একটি সু-সংস্কৃত মণির সঙ্গে তুলনা করেছিলেন। এ তুলনা যথার্থ। এগুলিকে আমরা সৃষ্টি-কবিতা বলতে পারি। এই সৃষ্টি-কবিতাগুলি রক্তমণির মতোই দীপ্যমান।



SELF PORTRAIT

By Tagore

আত্মচিত্র
— রবীন্দ্রনাথ



WOMAN *by* TAGORE

Portrait Study of Tagore
in popular American Monthly
MENTOR - MAY - 1921

মাসিক মাসিক পত্র
MENTOR-এ
মে ১৯২১ সংখ্যায়
প্রকাশিত প্রচ্ছদপট



প্রাণিক — অসিত কুমার হালদার

A PLAQUE
By Asit Halder

দেশে দেশে রবীন্দ্রনাথ

ভবানী মুখোপাধ্যায়



নোবেল পুরস্কার পাওয়ার আগেই যুরোপে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবি হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি মিলেছে। ১৯১২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিশু-বিজয়ের শুরু। রবীন্দ্রনাথ লণ্ডনে এসে পৌঁছেছিলেন ১৯১২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের ১৬ই জুন তারিখে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাতে ছিল তাঁর নানা কাব্যগ্রন্থের মধ্য থেকে নির্বাচিত কিছু কবিতার ইংরেজী অনুবাদ। এই অনুবাদও যে সার্থক এবং সর্বাঙ্গসুন্দর হয়েছিল তা নয়, তবু রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিমানসের পরিচয় ছিল সেই অনুদিত কবিতাগুলিতে।

সেই বছর পয়লা জুলাই তারিখে, অর্থাৎ লণ্ডনে পৌঁছানোর একপক্ষ কালের মধ্যেই শ্রীমা উইলিয়াম রথেনসাইন তাঁর বন্ধু জর্জ বার্নার্ড শ'কে যে চিঠিখানি লিখেছিলেন তা বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। এই চিঠিতে রথেনসাইন তথা বিদগ্ধ ইংল্যান্ডের দৃষ্টিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের পরিচয় পাওয়া বাবে :

.....আমার একান্ত বাসনা তুমি এসে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরকে দেখে যাও। একদিন এসে তাঁর সঙ্গে আলাপ করে যাও। বাংলায় সাহিত্য, শিল্প, শিক্ষা, প্রভা, ধর্ম, আভিজাত্য, গণতন্ত্র প্রভৃতি সবকিছুই পাইনি। এই রবীন্দ্রনাথ। ভারতের আর কোন দূর যদি আমাদের পক্ষে দেখা না যত্ন হর তাহলে এই একটা মানুষকে দেখেই বাবু। করা যাবে যে তাঁর সব সারা বিশ্বের মধ্যে এক সাদৃশ্যময় দেশ।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে উইলিয়াম রথেনসাইনের পরিচয় এর কয়েক বছর আগে ভারতবর্ষে ঘটেছিল। রথেনসাইন এসেছিলেন অবনীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে, সেই সঙ্গে আলাপ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেই যোগসূত্র ধরেই লণ্ডনে পৌঁছে উইলিয়াম রথেনসাইনের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করলেন। কথাপ্রসঙ্গে একদিন কয়েকটি কবিতার অনুবাদ পাঠ করে শোনালেন রথেনসাইনকে। কবিতাগুলি রথেনসাইনকে মুগ্ধ করল। তাঁর কয়েকটি বেছে নিয়ে বিইপ করিয়ে রথেনসাইন তাঁর যে সব বন্ধুদের পাঠালেন তাঁদের মধ্যে ইংরেজ, স্ট্রাকোড-লুকস্ ও বাউলী উল্লেখযোগ্য। বলা বাহুল্য, সকলেই রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা পাঠে অভিভূত ও বিস্মিত হলেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা তাঁদের ভাল লেগেছে। কবিও এই উৎসাহ ও প্রশংসা লাভে পুলকিত হলেন।

রথেনসাইন এই অভাবনীয় উৎসাহ লক্ষ্য করে আনন্দিত হলেন এবং তাঁর বাগভবনে এক বৃহত্তম মজলিসের আয়োজন করলেন। এই মজলিসে আমন্ত্রিত হয়ে উপস্থিত হলেন নে সিনক্রেয়ার, ইতিলিন আণ্ডারলিন, আনস্ট রিফ, ফক্স-স্ট্রাওয়েজ, চার্লস টোভেনিয়ান, এডুয়া পাউণ্ড, এলিসমেনেল, হেনরী মোভিনয়ন প্রভৃতি। সেদিনকার অবিস্মরণীয় রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতা পাঠ করে শোনালেন উইলিয়াম বাউলার ইংরেজী। এই দিনই রবীন্দ্র-

নাথ সর্বপ্রথম দেখলেন চার্লস এনড্রুজকে, তিনি তখন দিল্লীর সেন্ট ট্রাফেন্স কলেজে অব্যাপনার কাজ নিরেছেন।

ইংরেজী সংস্করণ 'পীতাকলি'র মোট ১০০টি কবিতার ৫১টি 'পীতাকলি'র, ১৭টি 'পীতাকলি'র ১৬টি 'দৈবদর্শন', ১১টি 'প্রেম'র, ৩টি 'শিশু'র, আর বাকিগুলি 'চৈত্রী', 'স্মরণ', 'কল্পনা', 'উৎসর্গ', 'অচলারতন' থেকে একটি করে গৃহীত। ১৯১২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের পয়লা নভেম্বর এই কাব্যগ্রন্থ প্রকাশিত হয়।

"Gitanjali" (Song Offerings) - A collection of prose translations made by the author from the Bengali - with an Introduction by W. B. Yeats : Printed at the Chiswick Press for the India Society" ইংরেজী 'পীতাকলি'র এই টাইটেল পেজ। এই গ্রন্থের ৭৫০ খণ্ড মাত্র ছাপা হয়, তার মধ্যে ২৫০ খণ্ড সর্বসাধারণের মধ্যে বিক্রির ব্যবস্থা ছিল।

এই প্রসঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের কথা বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখনীয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন : 'বাংলা পীতাকলির কবিতা আপন মনে ইংরেজীতে তর্জমা করেছিলাম। শরীর অসুস্থ ছিল, আর কিছু করার ছিল না। কোনও দিন এগুলি ছাপা হবে এমন স্পর্শের কথা ধারণাও ভাবিনি। তার কারণ প্রকাশযোগ্য ইংরেজী লেখার শক্তি আমার নেই—এই পরখাই আমার মনে বদ্ধমূল ছিল।'

খাতাখানা যখন কবি ইংরেজির হাতে পড়ল তিনি একদিন রথেনসাইনের বাড়িতে অনেকগুলি ইংরেজ সাহিত্যিক ও সাহিত্য-রসজ্ঞকে তাঁর থেকে কিছু আবৃত্তি করে শোনালেন বলে নিমন্ত্রণ করেছিলেন। আমি মনের মধ্যে ভাবী সন্দ্বিষ্ট হলেম। তাঁর দুটি কারণ ছিল। নিতান্ত সাধারণের স্বপ্নের দর্শনার্থে লাইনের কবিতা শুনিতে কোনদিন আমি কোন বাঙালী শ্রোতাকে যথেষ্ট তৃপ্তি পেতে দেখিনি।.....ইংরেজ সেদিনকার সভায় পাঁচ-ষাটটি মাত্র কবিতা একটিল পর আর একটি শুনিতে পড়া শেষ করলেন। ইংরেজ শ্রোতার নীরবে শুনালেন। নীরবে চলে গেলেন—দৃষ্টির পালনের উপবৃত্ত বন্যবাদ পর্যন্ত অন্যকে দিলেন না। সে রাতে নিতান্ত লজ্জিত হয়ে বাসায় ফিরে গেলাম।

পরের দিন চিঠি আসতে লাগল। দেশান্তরে যে খাতাখানা করেছি তাঁর অভাবনীয়তার বিষয় সেই দিনই সম্পূর্ণভাবে আমাকে অভিভূত করেছে। (তীর্থবন্দ—দিল্লীপত্রের বার। পৃঃ ১৩৮)

রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বয়ং সংশোধন, বাংলা কবিতার ইংরেজী তর্জমা, কেমন হবে। কতটুকু বা পাওয়া যাবে। যুরোপকে আকর্ষণ করবে বাংলাদেশের কবির এই স্বল্পরতন কবিতা? এই প্রশ্নের জবাব পাওয়া গেল ১৯১৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মার্চ মাসে Fortnightly

রবীন্দ্র জন্ম শতবার্ষিকী স্মারক গ্রন্থ

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

Review: সামান্য বিখ্যাত অপ্রচলিত কবি একুশা প্রাউডকট
সম্প্রদায় সমালোচনায়। প্রবন্ধটিতে যখন প্রকাশিত হয়, তখনও কবি
নোবেল পুরস্কারে সম্মানিত হয়নি, এটি একই প্রবন্ধটি বিশেষ মূল্যবান।
একুশা প্রাউডকট নিবেদনঃ

শ্রীমদ্বৈষ্ণৱীকামাখ্যৈকচক্ৰেনৰ্ভাবপ্রাণ্ডেভেনবকশ্য। (Ganarjali)
 আমার কাছে এক প্রবচনবোধী যোগী। পঠিত হয় তা আমার
 বক্তব্য দিক বুঝবেন না, আমার বক্তব্য কবির কীর্তি প্রমাণিত।
 এই কবিতা প্রতি বোলে, শ্রীচন্দ্রপরিবেশে ও উচ্চ স্থানে পঠিত করে
 হলে। এই কবিতার অনুবাদিক শ্রী সত্যনারায়ণ প্রমি সৈয়দ মহা
 শিখার প্রচেষ্টায় যথ্য সংগৃহীত যাবতম।

[illegible]

যখনই খাউচর গ্রাম সন্নিহিত নতুন নবীকান্দা, নবীকান্দায়েন
প্রদেশ, এর মধ্যস্থিত নতুন নতুন মধ্যস্থিত বিদ্যমান গ্রাম খাউচর
কলেজের নবী গ্রাম নবীকান্দা বা প্রদেশের মধ্যস্থিত নতুন
নবীকান্দায়েন নবীগ্রামিয়েন মধ্যস্থিত মধ্যস্থিত নতুন
খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত মধ্যস্থিত নতুন নবী নবী নবী
উদ্যোগের খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত গ্রাম খাউচর
খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত নতুন নতুন খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত
খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত নতুন নতুন খাউচর মধ্যস্থিত

[illegible][illegible]

উপাধিবিহীন নিরুচ্চরক আঁচশায় অগাউ। বন্য বনেন্দ্র বদলে নদন হয়—
 যেন আদিত্য বদধন মানস।

বন্দীকন্যার প্রাণ ১৯৩১ খ্রীশ্বেশ্বর লণ্ডন যাত্রা সমাপ্তি পক্ষে
সংগ্রাম হয়েছিল। তিনি লণ্ডন পৌঁছানোর একমাসের মধ্যেই
The Nation নামক ইংরেজী সাপ্তাহিকের কড়পক্ষ 'এককো-
নাদো ঘোষণা' করিসম্মরণ্য এক বিবৃতি পাঠিয়ে প্রাণোচ্চ
করেন। এই সময়ে ভোক্তা বিদ্রোহ যথুলায়ের প্রায়
সর্বত্রই উপস্থিত ছিলেন। এই সময়েই জন মেসফিল্ড, বার্নি
নাসেল, এইচ. ডি. ডয়েলস পড়ার মধ্যে কবিতা পরিচয় ঘটে।
এই সময়ে ও স্বাধীন মূলে পিতৃশ্রমের সেই কয়েকটি অনুলিপি
কবিতা।

দ্বীপকোষের কাজে। যে আশাশুভ মনুষ্য যোগ্য যেদিন প্রবেশিত হইবে তাহা মোটে উদ্ভিষ্ট। কানন, হিত প্রভৃতি আশাশুভ মনুষ্য দ্বিগত আশাশুভ, দ্বীপকোষের কনিষ্ঠ ছিল বল পরিত্রিত হইতে আশাশুভ, আশাশুভ মনুষ্য হইতে কনিষ্ঠ কনিষ্ঠ (যদিও বাহা আশিষ্টছিল)।

বাবাবাব বনাম বাবাবাব মদন প্রসন্ন বসু। এই প্রসঙ্গে ক্রি. প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে
কনিষ্ঠ, যা নিম্নে এই বিবরণের দল প্রসঙ্গে উল্লেখ। প্রসঙ্গে
প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে
প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে
প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে প্রসঙ্গে

যাদ্বে জিদদর অনিদুল আদে তা ডানবদেব ই নাজী
 অনুবাদেব পবককপি যখন মাকমিলন কোম্পানী তার কাচে
 প্রাদিগ্ধিচলেন এখন তিনি এমনই আত্মহারা হয়ে পড়েন যে কোন
 বাহেই শ্রবণোত্তর করায় অনুবাদেব অনুমতি প্রাথনা করেন।
 যাদ্বে জিদ খাঁ প্রাণীর করায় অনুবাদও বদেখিলেন। যেদিনও
 তিনি উদেখিত হয়ে বদাঙ্গনাথের কাছে খিদে বদেখিলেন।
 ভোগাব মত করির পথ চেয়েই রয়ে ছিলেন। বদাঙ্গনাথের
 খাঁ প্রাণীর করায় অনুবাদেব সন্ধ্যা ভুজিকাশেয়ে যে কথা
 যাদ্বে জিদ বদেখেন, তার মধ্যে তার যব লগা হয়েছে মনে করি।
 খাঁ প্রাণীর শেষ কবী কবিতায় মৃত্যুর মন্ত্র স্বনিহিত। এর চেয়ে
 উপস্থাপন ও সমুদ্র স্বর আমি কোন দেশের কোনও সচিব
 যাব কনিহি।

[illegible]

এরপর ১৯১৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কবি জাপান ভ্রমণে গিয়েছিলেন। তখন প্রকাশিত হয়েছে তাঁর 'Fruit Gathering'—বিভিন্ন কাব্যগ্রন্থের নিবন্ধিত ৬৭টি কবিতার সংকলন এই গ্রন্থে পরিবেশিত। জাপানে কোবে শহরে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে যেদিন 'জাপানী সাইংবাদিক সমিতি' সন্মানে আহ্বান করেন সেদিন কাউন্ট ওকুমা জাপানী ভাষায় কবিকে অভিনন্দন জ্ঞাপন করেন, কবি তাঁর প্রতিভাঘন দিচ্ছিলেন বাংলা ভাষায়। জাপানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ 'The Spirit of Japan' এবং 'The Message of India to Japan' এই দুটি বিষয়ে বক্তৃতা দান করেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের অপ্রিয় সত্য-ভাষণের ফলে জাপানী কতৃপক্ষরা তাঁর ওপর অসন্তোষ হয়। এই সময়েই ভারতীয়দের প্রতি দুর্ভাবার প্রতিবাদে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কান্নাভার ভানকুবেরের আনন্দ প্রত্যাখ্যান করেন।

আমেরিকার 'স্বপ্নপ্রীতি' ও 'অখণ্ড' তাঁর প্রতি কবির কন্ঠে যে বেশেও তাঁকে অপ্রীতিভাজন হতে হয়েছে। সভ্যভাষণে এবং সভ্যনিষ্ঠায় অচঞ্চল রবীন্দ্রনাথ কিন্তু ব্যক্তিগত স্বার্থে নিজের বক্তব্যকে অনুচ্চারিত রাখেন নি। এই সূত্রে 'Personality' নামক প্রবন্ধগ্রন্থ থেকে পশ্চিম সম্পর্কিত উক্তিটি বিশেষ অর্থসূচক। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন—

"The west may believe in the Soul of Man, but she does not really believe that the universe has a Soul. Yet this is the belief of the East, and the whole mental contributions of the East to mankind is filled with this idea."

বিশ্বের সঙ্গে মানুষের নিবিড় আত্মিক যোগ। এই সংযোগই বিশ্বেরও প্রাণ প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছে, এই বিশ্বাস রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছিল। আকাশভরা সূর্যভরা বিশ্বভরা প্রাণ—এ শিক্ষা রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভারতের মানিকে লাভ করে বিশ্ববাসীকে শুনিয়েছেন। প্রায় এই কালেই বলেছেন—আমাদের সভ্যতার জন্ম অরণ্যে, সেই জন্মলগ্নে পারিপার্শ্বিক অদৃশ্যই তার প্রবৃত্তিকে গড়ে তুলেছে। ক্যাকস্টন বলে যে যব বক্তৃতা দিয়েছিলেন তার মতো বলেছেন—...when a Man does not realise his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him.

[Sadhana]

ভিন্নশে যে ১৯১৯ তারিখে রবীন্দ্রনাথ জার্মানিগোলা বাগের অত্যাচারের প্রতিবাদে নাইট উপাধি ত্যাগ করেন। লর্ড চেমসফোর্ডকে তিনি জানালেনঃ আমার এই প্রতিবাদ আমার অতর্কিত দেশস্বর্গীয় মৌনস্বপ্নের অভিব্যক্তি—(Surprised into a dumb anguish of terror.) বলা বাহুল্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই বিচিত্র প্রতিবাদে যেদিন ঘরে-বাইরে একটা কিম্বদন্তি তৈরি হয়েছিল। এর পর ১৯২০তে রবীন্দ্রনাথ আবার যুরোপ যাত্রা করেন। থাণ্ডা থেকে জাহাজে সহযাত্রী হিসাবে পেরেছিলেন। তিনি কবিকে হাকিফ আত্মিক করে শোনাচ্ছেন, মারো মারো সফাবাদ সম্পর্কে আলোচনাও করতেন। লণ্ডনে পৌঁছে রথেনফেল্ড হাউস, বার্নার শ, ফকস-স্ট্রীট ওয়েজ, নিকোলাস রোয়েরিখ, কার্ন হাম প্রেহান প্রভৃতির সঙ্গে দেখা হল। উনিশে জুন তারিখে এককোডে এক চাএসভায় কবির ভাষণ দানের কথা। ডাঃ বরটি ব্রাজিলের যেদিন সভাপতিত্ব করার কথা। তিনি তখন ইংল্যান্ডে রাজকবি। তিনি সেই আমন্ত্রণ গ্রহণ করলেন না, চিঠি লিখে জানালেনঃ

"...I do not feel able to accept the invitation, which I have just received, to speak at the meeting

in Oxford on Friday. I am writing, especially as I never sent any answer to your several communications since the late disturbances in India.

[পুরুষোত্তম রবীন্দ্রনাথ—অমল হোস : পৃঃ ৮১]

মৈত্রেয়ী দেবীর 'মংপুতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ' নামক গ্রন্থেও এ কথাই উল্লেখ আছেঃ

"ওদের ওটা খুব অপমান লেগেছিল। তারপর ইংল্যান্ড গিয়ে দেখলাম—ওরা যে কথা ভুলতে পারছে না। ইংরেজ রাজভক্ত জাতি—রাজাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান তাই অত আঘাত দিয়েছিল ওদের।"

কবি ইংল্যান্ডে এই শীতল অভ্যর্থনা থেকে নিকৃতি লাভের জন্যই (with a feeling of relief from studied coolness) ১৯২০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে আগস্ট মাসে ফ্রান্সে গিয়ে পৌঁছলেন। কবি এই সময়ে ফ্রান্সের বনকুবের মন্দিরে কানের গৃহে অতিথি হয়েছিলেন। এই সন্ধ্যায়ে তিনি যুদ্ধের স্বাধীনতা প্রত্যক্ষ করার সুযোগ গ্রহণ করেছিলেন এবং অত্যন্ত বেদনাবোধ করেছিলেন। ফ্রান্সের প্রখ্যাত মহিলা কবি কঁতেশ দ্য মোয়াইলে এই সময়েই কবিকে জানান যে, দিক যে কালে মহাযুদ্ধ ঘোষিত হল সেই মুহূর্তে তিনি এবং মন্দিরে ক্রেমেঙ্গো রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'পীতাম্বল'র ফরাসী অনুবাদ পড়েছিলেন। যুদ্ধের হত্যাশা, ভাল্লা এবং তীব্রতার নিদারুণ অশান্তি থেকে নিকৃতি লাভের জন্য ভারতীয় কবির কবিতাই যেদিন তাঁদের মনে শান্তি ও স্বস্তি দান করেছিল।

আরেকটি অনুরূপ কাহিনী এই সঙ্গে উল্লেখযোগ্য। দিক যেদিন মহাযুদ্ধের অবসান ঘটল, যেদিন তখন ইংরেজ কবি উইলফ্রেড গুয়েনের শেলের আঘাতে মৃত্যু হয়—সম্ভবতঃ ফ্রান্সের বনকুবেরে। তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত জিনিস ও কাগজপত্র তাঁর শোক-সন্তপ্ত জনমীর কাছে ওরান অফিস থেকে পাঠানো হল। সেই বন্ধু গুয়েনের নোটবই পড়তে পড়তে আবিষ্কার করলেন কয়েক ছত্র কবিতা এবং তার তলায় লেখা আছে এই কয় ছত্র (কবিতাটি সম্বন্ধে নেই) আমার মনে এই দুঃসময়ে অতিশয় শান্তিদান করেছে। বন্ধু কোনদিন ঠাকুর কবির নাম শোনেন নি, তবু কবিকে সন্ধান করে তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত কৃতজ্ঞতা জানিয়েছিলেন।

উনাতিকুমার চট্টোপাধ্যায় একটি প্রবন্ধে লিখেছেন—যখন ফ্রান্সে তখন কবিকে একবার ট্যাগ্লি চড়ে কোথায় যেতে হয়েছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নেমে যাওয়ার পর ট্যাগ্লি-চালক শ্রীযুক্ত চট্টোপাধ্যায় মহাশয়কে প্রশ্ন করেন—এই শ্রমিতুল্য মানুষটি কে? শ্রীযুক্ত চট্টোপাধ্যায় বললেন—হিন্দুকবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ বসুগোঁরা। এই কথা শোনার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই সেই ট্যাগ্লিচালক মন্দিরে তার ভাড়া প্রত্যাখ্যান করল। বলল—আমি কবির 'ডাকঘর' নাটকের ফরাসী অনুবাদ পাঠ করে বিশেষ আনন্দ পেয়েছি, তাঁকে বহন করেছি এ আমার পোভাণা। কি করে ভাড়া নেব—ফানিওলি সামান্য হলেও অসামান্য। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মতো রবীন্দ্রনাথের কি ভাবে সংযোগ ঘটেছিল এ তারই পরিচয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের 'ফাগুনী' নাটকটিও ফ্রান্সে বিশেষ সমাদর লাভ করে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ 'ফাগুনী' সম্পর্কে এক আশ্রয় বসেছেন,—'শারদোৎসব থেকে ফাগুনী পর্যন্ত যতগুলি নাটক লিখেছি, যখন বিশেষ করে মন দিয়ে দেখি তখন দেখতে পাই প্রত্যেকের ভিতরকার বুজোনি ওই একই—জীবনকে যত বলে জানতে গেলে মৃত্যুর মধ্য দিয়ে তার পরিচয় চাই। এই তব যুরোপ বুঝেছে।"

Les Nouvelles Littéraires নামক ফরাসী সাহিত্য

পত্রিকায় 'কাঙ্ক্ষানীতি' যে সুদীর্ঘ সমালোচনা প্রকাশিত হয়, প্রথম চৌধুরী মহাশয় তার একটি বঙ্গানুবাদ করেন। 'করাচী' লেখকের বক্তব্যের সামান্য অংশ উদ্ধৃত করা হল, সেক্সপীয়ারের A Midsummer Night's Dream নামক নাটকের সঙ্গে তুলনা করে লেখক বলেছেন—আমার বিশ্বাস যে বিলাহের মহা-নাট্যকার তার কুরকুরে কল্পনার খেলা দেখিয়ে কেবল আমাদের চিত্তবিনোদন ও চিত্তের চার অপমোদন করতে চেয়েছিলেন। অপরপক্ষে হিন্দু মহাকাব্য রবীন্দ্রনাথের উদ্দেশ্য তাঁর কাঙ্ক্ষানীতিতে আমাদের একটি সবজ্ঞানীয় তত্ত্বের উপদেশ দেওয়া। তিনি পৃথিবীর চিত্র-যৌবনের উৎসব সম্পাদনে রত...

(সবুজপত্র—জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১৩৩৩)।

'কাঙ্ক্ষানীতি' মূল ভ্রম যৌবনের এখানে চলার বাণী যুরোপকে যেদিন আনন্দ দিয়েছে।

জার্মানির কাপুট শহরে ১৯৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের চোদ্দটি জুলাই আইনসাইন ও রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাক্ষাৎকার ঘটে। সেই সময় 'আইনসাইন' প্রশ্ন করেন : অগ্রাংগে কে বিচ্ছিন্নকোনও দৈবশক্তি? কি আপনি বিশ্বাসী? উত্তরে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেন : বিচ্ছিন্ন শক্তি নয়, মানুষের গোমাইন ব্যক্তিঃ বিশ্বকে বাতপায় আনে। মানুষের ব্যক্তিরে অঘটে সবকিছু আসে। বিশ্ব যত, মানুষ যত। প্রোবিন ও ইলেকট্রন এবং তাদের পরস্পরের মধ্যকার যৌকিক মিলেই বহু গড়ে ওঠে। তবু বহুর আপাতকঠিন রূপ। তেমনি ব্যক্তিমুখ নিয়ে বিশ্বমানব, ব্যক্তির মধ্যে আছে মানবস্বত্বের য যোগ্য এবং এই যোগ্যই মানুষকে ভীষণ ব্রহ্ম বোধে। সময় বিশ্ব এইভাবে সঞ্চিত। এই হল মানবীর বিশ্বের আভ্যন্তর। আমি সেই ভাবধারাকেই শিল্প, সাহিত্য ও মানুষের বস্তুত্বের মধ্যে প্রকাশ করেছি।

সুদীর্ঘ কথোপকথন—শেষের লাইনসিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের বক্তব্য প্রকৃতভাবে প্রকাশিত। তাই তাঁর চিত্রপ্রদর্শনীর পরিচয় পত্রিকায় করাচী মহিলা কবি কর্তব্য দা মোহাইলস লিখেছেন : 'How noble he was and unstinted this wise man, in communion with himself, enigmatical and yet transparent, like the Silver Sea!'

রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভবিষ্যৎ যুরোপকে যেদিন বিচলিত করেছিল, শুরু করেছিল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ১৯২১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে যখন বালিমে গিয়েছিলেন তখন সেখানে তাঁকে বিপুল সম্মান দান করা হয়। এমনই একটি বিবরণ লিপিবদ্ধ করেছেন তৎকালীন (১৯২০-২৬) বালিনহ্ বিশিষ্ট বহিদুত ডায়কিউইটি ডি এবারনন। সেই ডায়েরীর সামান্য অংশ উদ্ধৃত করছি।

জুন ৩, ১৯২১। গতকাল ভাৰতীয় কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এখানে এসেছিলেন। বি. কল্লর মুক্তি, যাবমানবের উজ্জ্বল দৃষ্টান্ত। তৎকালীন চলার দাড়িতে সমধীষ আকৃতি। যৌক্তিক-বোধের যে মূর্তি আমাদের কল্পনা গড়া তাঁর চেয়ে মনোহর; তাঁর ধীর, মধুর কণ্ঠের আমাকে মুগ্ধ করেছে। জ্ঞানভান্ডিয়া ও জার্মানিতে তিনি বিপুল অভ্যাস লাভ করেছেন।

গতকাল এলেন, (লেডী ডি এবারনন, প্রাক্তন ব্রিটিশ প্রধান-মন্ত্রী রোসকেনার কন্যা) একটি সভায় তাঁর কবিতাপাঠ শুনে গিয়েছিলেন, সভাপতির ভেতরে যে ডিডের জন্য চুকতে পারে নি, এমন কি সেই রাষ্ট্রই পৌছতে পারে নি, এমনই প্রচণ্ড জনসমাগম হয়েছিল।

যেদিন যুরোপ নিলিষ্ট, আত্মহ নৈবৈজিক রবীন্দ্রনাথের আবির্ভাবে বিচলিত হয়েছিল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যুরোপকে বাববার দেখেছেন অস্বস্তিতে, তাঁর পোশাকী ও আঁপো বচেহারা রবীন্দ্রনাথের চোখে বরা পড়েছে। তিনি সভাভাষ্যে চিত্রদিনই নিভিকর দেখিয়েছেন। 'তাই ভাই-কাউন্ট ডি এবারনন' সেই ১৯২১ সনের ডায়েরীর সামান্য কয়েকটি কথার মধ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথের যুরোপ-সম্পর্কিত স্পষ্ট উক্তি বিশেষভাবে লক্ষ্য করা উচিত। অনেক পরে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর 'কালান্তরে' প্রাক-মহাসময়ের যুরোপ ও সমবোভর যুরোপে ইতিহাসের ক্ষেত্রে যে বিরোধ বোধে তা বলেছেন। যুরোপের সংস্কৃতিতে মনুষ্য আত্ম নির্দাসিত, সেখানে হানিকার করেছে পশুত্ব। খ্রীষ্টিয় নীতির বাক্য ঠাণ্ডা সিন্দুকে বদ্ধ করে রাখা হয়েছে। মুখোশ খুলে পড়েছে যুরোপের—তার ভিতর থেকে বেরিয়ে পড়েছে তাঁর পশুপ্রকৃতি। মানুষের অস্বাস্থ্য সম্পদকে বিকশিত করতে হবে, মানুষকে তাঁর স্বাধীন-সময়ে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে হবে—এই ছিল রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাণী।

প্রথম চৌধুরী মহাশয় লিখেছেন : রবীন্দ্রনাথের বাণী ইউরোপের বহুলোকের মনে যে প্রবেশ করেছে ও স্থান পেয়েছে এটা হচ্ছে ইউরোপের গৌরবের কথা। এ থেকে শুধু এই প্রমাণ হয় যে ইউরোপের বহুলোক শিক্ষা-দীক্ষার ফলে সেই মন লাভ করেছে, যে মন পৃথিবীর সকল দেশের সকল জাতির বড় কথা মাদরে গ্রহণ করতে পারে।—(সবুজপত্র—শ্রাবণ ১৩৩৪)

১৯২৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মার্চ মাসে কবি চীন এবং জাপান এমবে গিয়েছিলেন। বলা বাহুল্য তাঁর সামান্য ও মৈত্রীর বাণী সব দেশেই সমান সাড়া জাগিয়েছে। চীনা তরুণ সম্প্রদায়ের ডাঃ জু সী কবির গুণমুগ্ধ ভক্ত শিখা হয়ে পড়েন। জাপানে কবির সঙ্গে বিপ্লবী রাসবিহারী বহুর সাক্ষাৎকার ঘটে। জুলাই মাসে কবি স্বদেশে ফিরে আসেন।

এই ১৯২৪ সনে য়েপ্টেম্বরে ভারত দক্ষিণ আমেরিকা যাত্রা করেন। পেরুর স্বাধীনতা-শতবার্ষিকীর আমন্ত্রণ কবি গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। সান ইসাডোরে গুণমুগ্ধ ভক্ত ভিক্টোরিয়া ওকাম্পোর প্রদত্ত বাগানবাড়িতে কবি কিছুদিন বিশ্রাম গ্রহণ করেন। এই সময়ে 'পূর্ববী'র অনিকাশ কবি প্রবলী লিখিত হয়, 'পূর্ববী' এই ভিক্টোরিয়া ওকাম্পোকে কবি 'বিভা' নামে উৎসর্গ করেন। এই ভিক্টোরিয়া ওকাম্পো ১৯৩০ সনের মার্চ মাসে কবির শিল্প-প্রদর্শনীর ব্যাপারেও বিশেষ সাহায্য করেন।

১৯২৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের মে মাসে কবি ইতালী যাত্রা করেন। মোলিনী কবির সঙ্গে দেখা করেন। কবির উক্তি নিয়ে কিফিঃ ভুল বোঝাবুঝির সৃষ্টি হয়। ক্যাসিঃ সরকার কবির বাণীর সুবিধামত অংশ নিয়ে নিজেদের প্রচারকার্যে ব্যবহার করেন। 'মাকফোঁস পাড়িয়ে', ইতালীর বিধানসভার সদস্য মাভিয়োতি কবির ক্যাসিবিবোধী মন্তব্য প্রকাশ করেছিলেন। প্রফেসর ডি, লেসনী বলেছেন : 'Tagore's conversations with reporters in Italy were the product of these people : the reporter, the interpreter and Tagore himself.'—স্বতরাং এই অবস্থায় যেমন বিকৃতি ঘটা সম্ভব তাই হয়েছে।

আগস্টে কবি ইংলণ্ডে ফিরে এলেন। ইংলণ্ডে রথেন-গোইন, রবার্ট ব্রীজেয় প্রভৃতি পুরোনো বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎকার করে কবি নরওয়ের সম্রাটের আমন্ত্রণে অসলো শহরে অভ্যর্থিত হলেন। মেকহোলমে স্টেন হেদিন, রিয়ারসেন, যোহান বোয়ার

প্রভৃতির সঙ্গে পরিচয় হয়। কোপেনহেগেনে দার্শনিক হফডি এবং বিখ্যাত সাহিত্য-সমালোচক জর্জ ব্রান্ডেসের সঙ্গেও কবির যোগাযোগ ঘটেছিল।

রামানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায় মহাশয় ১৯২৬ সনে 'লীপ' অব নেশনসের আমন্ত্রণে যখন জেনেভায় গিয়েছিলেন তখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ যুরোপে। তিনি Rabindranath At Dresden নামক গ্রন্থে সেই সময়ে যুরোপে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সম্পর্কে কিরকম আগ্রহ লক্ষ্য করেছেন তা লিখেছেন। বারবার তাঁকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ মনে করে সাধারণ মানুষ ভিড় করে এসেছেন। রামানন্দবাবু লিখেছেন :

নির্ধারিত সময়ের কিছু আগে সভাস্থলে পৌঁছলাম। তিন চার সহস্র মানুষ বসে এমনই বিরাট সভাকক্ষ। একটিও আসন খালি নাই। অনেকে দণ্ডায়মান, শোভাদেব অনেকেই রমণী। এঁদের অনেকেই ইংরাজী জানেন, বাংলা জানেন না তাঁহাদের জন্য বালিন যুনিভার্সিটির হিন্দী অধ্যাপক পণ্ডিত তারাচাঁদ রায় জার্মান ভাষায় কবির বক্তব্য অনুবাদ করিয়া দিলেন, ইনি পাঞ্জাব প্রদেশবাসী। অনেক রিপোর্টার ছিলেন, তাঁহারাও অধিকাংশ ক্ষেত্রে নারী। যিনি সমগ্র বক্তব্য লিপিবদ্ধ করেন তিনি নারী। কবি অনেকগুলি ইংরাজী ও বাংলা কবিতা আবৃত্তি করিলেন। কবিতা পাঠের সময় ঘনঘন হৃৎস্পন্দি হইতেছিল। The Crescent Moon হইতে যে সব কবিতা পাঠ করা হইল, তাহা বিশেষভাবে সমাদৃত হইল, ফলে কবিকে নির্ধারিত সংখ্যার বেশী কবিতা পাঠ করিতে হইল। নিম্নলিখিত কবিতাটি কবিকে দু-তিনবার পড়িতে হইল---

Why are those tears in your eyes, my child ?
How horrid of them to be always scolding you
for nothing ?

বিস্ময়বিভাবে সমগ্র গ্রন্থ উল্লেখ করার পরয়োজন নেই। এর পর কবি রাশিয়া গিয়েছেন। তাঁর 'রাশিয়ার চিঠি'র আবেদন আজও অম্লান। আজ পৃথিবীতে যে যুগান্তকারী ধর্মের সূচনা হয়েছে, সে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন মহাজাতির মধ্যে নয়, মানুষের দুই বিভাগের মধ্যে, শাসয়িতা ও শাসিত, শোষয়িতা ও শুদ্ধ।..... আমাদের দুপেই, আমাদের দৈন্যই আমাদের মহাশক্তি। সেইসেই জগৎ ভুড়ে আমাদের সঞ্চারন এবং সেইসেই ভবিষ্যতকে আমরা অধিকার করব। অথচ যারা বনিক তারা কিছুতেই একত্র মিলতে পারে না, স্বার্থের দুল্লভ্য প্রাচীরে তারা বিচ্ছিন্ন।

[রাশিয়ার চিঠি]

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এক হিসাবে ধর্মগুরু। তিনি স্বয়ং একটি ধর্মের প্রবর্তক ও প্রচারক। সারা বিশ্ব ভুড়ে তিনি ধর্মপ্রচারের উদ্দেশ্যে ভ্রমণ করেছেন, তাঁর নীতি ছিল "একলা চলোরে" - তাই এ তাঁর একক প্রচেষ্টা। তিনি যে ধর্মপ্রচার করেছেন তাঁর নাম মানব-ধর্ম। বুদ্ধের পর ভারতবর্ষের বাণী এমন ক্ষমতার ভাবে বিশ্বের দরবারে আন কে প্রচার করেছেন জানি না। তাই যোহান বোথার বলেছেন :- He is India bringing to Europe a new divine symbol, not the Cross but Lotus.

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও আমি যখন সর্বপ্রথম যোগাযোগ স্থাপিত বন্ধনে পরস্পর আকৃষ্ট হই। প্রচার পর সর্দারী পর্য্যবেশ বৎসর কাল কাটিয়া গেল। জীবনের বহু বিচিত্র বিকাশ ও বাবার পরিচয় লাভের পথে একদা আমি গিয়েছিলে তিনে অগ্রসর হইতে চিলাম। সেই ক্রান্তিমান প্রসঙ্গে বৎসরের পর বৎসর তিনি আমাকে প্রতিদিন যশা ও সাহচর্য দান করিয়াছেন। সহস্র সহস্র বৎসরের মৌনতা রূপাধীন একলতা অবশেষে একদিন যেন কথা কহিয়া উঠিল। আপন অন্তরজীবন স্বপ্ন-দুঃখ-পতন-অভ্যাসের কাচিনী যে আপনি লিপিবদ্ধ করিয়া চলিল। এই সরচিত ইতিহাসের দ্বারা ইংহি প্রমাণিত হইল যে, উদ্ভিদ হইতে আরম্ভ করিয়া উচ্চতম প্রাণী পর্যন্ত নিখিল জীবলোকে একই প্রাণ-স্পন্দন অনুভূত হইতেছে। একই প্রাণবাহা সব এই বহমান। যে বাবা একদিন আশ্রয় হইতে আশ্রয়কে বিচিন্ন করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল তাহা দূর হইল। উদ্ভিদ ও প্রাণী একই জীবনবাহার বহুমুখী বিকাশ বহিয়া প্রতিপন্ন হইল। এই মহাযাত্রাকে জানিতে পারিলে জগদ্ব্যাপারে পরম মহিমার স্ববিকাশ ঘটয়া যাইবে না, 'দন' প্রভাবতন নিবিড়তর হইয়া উঠিলে। মানুষ যে গ্রাম্য অসমাপ্ত জ্ঞান অসম্পূর্ণ দৃষ্টি ও অক্ষয় শক্তি লইয়াও অবিঘ্নীও দিক মহাসমুদ্রকে দুঃসাহসিক জয়যাত্রায় আপনাব চিত্ত তরঙ্গী ভাসাইয়া দিন-একি কম আশ্রয়ের কথা ? যে অবশ্যম্ভাব্য মহাযাত্রা বহুদিন অগোচর ছিল, এই অভিযান পথে অকস্মাৎ একদিন যে বহুসামুদ্রিকালের জন্য তাহার গোচরীভূত হইতে থাকে এবং যে আরম্ভবস্তা গতকাল তাহাকে বিশ্বব্যাপী প্রাণস্পন্দনের প্রতি নিম্নরচিত করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল তাহা তাহাব মন হইতে মুহূর্তকালের মধ্যে নিঃশেষে নিলাইয়া যায়।

বিশু জগতের এই একাত্তর রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবি-দ-র নিকট বস্তু দিয়াছে এবং তাহার কাব্যে ও সাধনায় এই একাত্তরটি আত্মপ্রকাশ করিতেছে। প্রতিদিন প্রচারদৃষ্টি উদার থেকে উদারতর হোক এবং তাহার বাবা নিখিলের সবই পরিবাস্তব হোক, এই কামনা করি।

কবির সপ্ততিতম জন্মবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে

অশ্বতীশ চক্র বসু



রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্যে উপমা

৬১ অরুণকুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়

উপমা কি কেবল অলংকার, না, সাহিত্যের অবিচ্ছিন্ন অঙ্গ? সৌন্দর্য কি রমণীন্দ্রে শোভাবর্ধনকারী গছপা, না, রমণীকপলাবল্লভের অঙ্গীভূত? মহৎ কবিদের সৃষ্টিকর্মে উপমা বাইরের অলংকার নয়, তা রূপলাবণ্যের মতোই অঙ্গীভূত। রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যের উপমা বিচারে আমরা এই মতের সমর্থন পাই। আর কেবল কবিতায় নয়, প্রদরচনাতেও তা অবিরল।

উপমা ব্যবহারে রবীন্দ্রনাথের দক্ষতা ও কৌশলের প্রতি এখানে পাঠকের মনোযোগ আকর্ষণ করি।

‘যেতে নাছি দিন’ কবিতাটিতে বসন্তকাল ছবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ একটি উপমার মাধ্যমে বাক্য করেছেন। সে ছবিতে ব্যাপকতা ও বিশালতার চিত্রকরনা আছে। একটি উপমাকে এই ছবিতে বহুবিস্তারিত করা হয়েছে। ভাবের নব নবায়মান রূপায়ণে ব্যক্তিচিত্তের অনুভূতি বিশ্বগত আবেদনে সমৃদ্ধ হয়েছে।

‘যেতে নাছি দিন’ কবিতায় কোথাও বসন্তরূপকে ব্যাহত করা হয়নি। অথচ তারি মতো প্রকৌশলে ভাবচিত্রকে বসন্ত থেকে সত্যতর রূপে উপস্থাপিত করা হয়েছে। মূল বক্তব্য উপনীত হবার পূর্বে কী নিপুণ আয়োজন ও বিস্তার! প্রবাসী পিতার চারবড়রের কন্যাটি পিতাকে ছুটি-অশ্রু তার কম্বুরে ফিরে যেতে দেবে না—‘যেতে নাছি দিন’—কন্যার এই সঙ্কল্প মিনতি অথচ ক্রমপাশবদ্ধ পিতাকে চলে যেতেই হয়। প্রবাসী পিতৃ-হৃদয়ের এই বেদনাকে কবি বিশ্বগত করে তুলেছেন এই বলে—

দীপ্ত রৌদ্রে অনাবৃত

যুগ যুগান্তর প্রাপ্ত দিগন্তবিস্তৃত

ধরণীর পানে চেয়ে ফেলিনু নিশ্বাস।

পরবর্তী চরণেই—

কী গভীর দুঃখে মগ্ন সমস্ত আকাশ,
সমস্ত পৃথিবী।

মৃত্যুকে বারো দিতে সমস্ত সংসার ও পৃথিবী ব্যাপী যে করুণ অসহায় আয়োজন, তার পতি এবার কবি আমাদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করছেন—প্রবাসী পিতৃহৃদয়ের ব্যাকুলতা এবার বিশ্ববেদনায় জ উঠেছে—

চারিদিক হতে আজ

অবিপ্রাণ কণে মোর উঠিতেছে বাজি

সেই বিশ্বমর্মভেদী করুণ ক্রন্দন

মোর কন্যাকণ্ঠস্বরে, শিশুর মতন

বিশ্বের অবেদনাবাদী।

এই সর্বজনীন বেদনা এইবার মূল বক্তব্য উপনীত হয়েছে—
এত প্রস্তুতি ও অপেক্ষার পর মূল ছবি উদ্ঘাটিত হলো—

‘বসন্তকাল বসিয়া আছেন এলোচলে
দূরব্যাপী শস্যক্ষেত্রে জাহ্নবীর কূলে
একখানি রৌদ্রপীত হিরণ্য-অঞ্চল
বক্ষে টানি দিয়া; স্থির নয়ন যুগল
দূর নীলাশ্বরে মগ্ন; মুখে নাছি বাণী।
দেখিলাম তাঁর সেই মূন মুখখানি
সেই ধারধায়ে লীন স্তব্ধ মর্মহত
মোর চারি বৎসরের কন্যাটির মতো।’

একটি সুদীর্ঘ স্তবকে একটি উপমাটি উপস্থাপনের শিল্পকৌশল এখানে জয়যুক্ত হয়েছে।

কেবল কন্যাবিরহ ও সাময়িক বিচ্ছেদবেদনা নয়, প্রয়াবিরহ ও চিরন্তন বিচ্ছেদবেদনাও রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাতে অপরূপ শিল্পমূর্তি লাভ করেছে। সাদৃশ্যমানতাই এখানে শেষ কথা নয়, কল্পনার উদ্ভাবনীশক্তি এখানে প্রধান। ভাবসাদৃশ্যের সীমাকে লঙ্ঘন করে কবি কল্পনামৌলিকতার সাহায্য পাঠককে যেরাঙ্গো উপস্থিত করেন, সেখানে পাঠকচিত্ত বিক্ষারিত হয়। এই ‘চিত্তবিক্ষার’ কবিপ্রতিভার পরিচায়ক। পুরানো ভাব এখানে নোতুন চমৎকতি লাভ করে। আমরা তাই আবিষ্ট হয়ে উত্তারণ করি ও মানসপটে এই অপরূপ আলংকার দেখি—

আজ তুমি আর নাই, দূর হতে গেছে তুমি দূরে,
বিধুর হয়েছে সন্ধ্যা মুছে-যাওয়া তোমার সিন্দুরে,
সঙ্গীহীন এ জীবন শূন্য ঘরে হয়েছে শ্রীহীন,
সব মানি—সবচেয়ে, মানি, তুমি ছিলে এক দিন।

বিরহী চিত্তের শূণ্যতা, কৃতজ্ঞতা, আশ্রিত বেদনা ও স্তব্ধমূর্তি—সব এই মুহূর্তে আমাদের মনে ভীর করে আসে। স্থূল অভাবের চেতনা থেকে আমরা সূক্ষ্ম বিরহচেতনায় উন্নীত হই। অথচ এই উপমাটিতে কবি কোনো বিশেষ চিত্রকর ও বিশেষ উপাদান ব্যবহার করেন নি। বিধুর সন্ধ্যা ও শূণ্য শ্রীহীন ঘরের উপাদান কবিপ্রতিভার অলৌকিক স্পর্শে অসামান্যতা অর্জন করেছে।

রবীন্দ্রকব্য পাঠান্তে আমাদের বলতে ইচ্ছা হয়, ‘উপমা রবীন্দ্রনাথ’। তার কয়েকটি উদাহরণ দিই।

(ক) দীপশিখাসম কাঁপে ভীত ভালোবাসা। (মানসী)

(খ) চকল আলো আশার মতন কাঁপিছে জলে।

(সোনার তরী)

(গ) বিজন গ্রারার মাঝে কাঁপছে যেমন
স্বপ্নের আলোকময় রহস্য অগৌণ,
ওই নয়নের নিবিড় তিমিরতলে কাঁপছে তেমনি
আমার রহস্যশিখা। (মানসী)

(ঘ) সেই আলোটি নিমেষ-হৃত
প্রিয়র ব্যাকুল চাওয়ায় মতো,
সেই আলোটি মায়ের প্রাণের ভয়ের মতো দোলে।

(ঙ) আকাশের দূরান্তরে
একে একে অন্ধকারে হতেছে বাহির
একেকটি দীপ্ত তারা স্তব্ধ পরীর
প্রদীপের মতো। (চিত্রা)

এই সব অলঙ্কার উপমাগর্ভ বলে সাধারণ ভাবে এদের উপমা বলে অভিহিত করছি।

এই পাঁচটি চিত্র সৌন্দর্যবোধে বিশিষ্ট। চমৎকৃত-সৃষ্টি নানা কৌশল এখানে অবলম্বিত হয়েছে। কোনোটিতে অজানাকে জানার দ্বারা। কোনোটির রহস্যময়কে রহস্যময়ের দ্বারা, আবার কোনোটির অজানাকে অজানার দ্বারা ব্যাখ্যা করা হয়েছে। স্থূল বাস্তবলোক থেকে সূক্ষ্ম ভাবলোকে উত্তরণ এত অনায়াস ভাবে স্ফটিকরূপে নিষ্কাশন হয়েছে যে আমাদের চোতনার উজ্জীবন ঘটে আমাদের অভ্যন্তরে। এই উপমাগুলির কোনোটিই গতানুগতিক নয়, অথচ কোনোটিই অসাধারণ উপাদানের দ্বারা নিমিত নয়। চিত্রময়ী বর্ণনার বাণী এখানে উপমাচিত্রের মাধ্যমে কবির বক্তব্যকে নিঃশেষে প্রকাশ করেছে। পুরোক্ত 'যেতে নাহি দিন' কবিতার উল্লেখিত উপমাচিত্রের বিস্তারিত আয়োজনের পাশে সদাশূন্য উপমাচিত্রের সংহতি ও সংঘম আমাদের মুগ্ধ করে।

উপমা প্রয়োগে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নৈপুণ্য কত গভীর ও দূর-বিস্তারী তার প্রমাণ পাই তার পদ্যরচনায়। এখানে গরুড়ের বিচিত্র সম্পদের সামান্য অংশ উদ্ধার করে দেখাই। গরুড়ের প্রকৃতির তথা মানবজন্মের নানা ছবি গরুর রবীন্দ্রনাথ উপস্থিত করেছেন। এই উপস্থাপনা একটি বিশেষ কৌশল অবলম্বিত হয়েছে। কেবল নয়নানুভূতি নয়, সমগ্র ইন্দ্রিয় গ্রামের উপরেই গরুর নির্ভর করেছেন; চোখে-দেখা বস্তুকে নাসিকা, স্বক ও কর্ণেজ্রয়ের দুরারে উপস্থিত করেছেন। দৃষ্টিচেতনার সঙ্গে মিলিত হয়েছে স্বাধচেতনা ও শ্রুতিচেতনা। নিচের উদাহরণগুলিতে আমার এই বক্তব্যের পৌষকতা হবে।

(ক) বাহিরেও অত্যন্ত গুমোট। দু-প্রহরের সময় খুব এক পয়লা ঝুঁটি হইয়া গিয়াছে। এখনো চারিদিকে মেঘ জমিয়া আছে। বাতাসের লেশমাত্র নাই। বর্ষা ঘরের চারিদিকে জঙ্গল এবং আগাধাগুলি অত্যন্ত বাড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে, সেখান হইতে এবং জলমগ্ন পানের ক্ষেত হইতে সিল্জ উদ্ভিজ্জের ঘন গন্ধ চতুর্দিকে একটি নিশ্চল প্রাচীরের মতো জমাটি হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়া আছে। গোয়ালের পশ্চাৎভী ডোবার মধ্য হইতে

ভেক ডাকিতেছে এবং বিস্তারিত যক্ষার নিস্তক আকাশ একেবারে পরিপূর্ণ। ('শান্তি')

(খ) গ্রীষ্মকর্মে বন হইতে একটি গন্ধ এবং বিস্তারিত আশ্রয়র আঁহর ঘরে আসিয়া প্রবেশ করিতেছিল। ('মহামায়া')

(গ) নিকটের পাখারের বন-তুলসী, পুদিনা ও মৌরির জঙ্গল হইতে একটি ঘন স্তম্ভ উঠিয়া স্থির আকাশকে ভাবাক্রান্ত করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল। ('কুসিত পামাণ')

(ঘ) একদিন বগাকালের মেঘমুগ্ধ দ্বিপ্রহরে ঈষৎ তপ্ত স্ককোনল বাতাস দিতেছিল; বোধে ভিজ্রা ঘাস এবং পাড়পালা হইতে একপ্রকার গন্ধ উৎপিত হইতেছিল, মনে হইতেছিল যেমন কাস্ত বরষীর উক নিঃশ্বাস গায়ের উপরে আসিয়া লাগিতেছে। ('পোদ্দিশার')

(ঙ) আকাশ হইতে একখানা অন্ধকার নামিয়া এবং পৃথিবী হইতে একখানা অন্ধকার উঠিয়া চোখের উপরকার এবং নিচেকার পল্লবের মতো একত্র আসিয়া মিলিত হইল। ('মণিহার')

গানের রাজ্যে উপমাপ্রয়োগ যে কত স্বাভাবিক, জীবন্ত ও প্রাণোচ্ছল হতে পারে তার প্রমাণ এখানে পাই। এইসব উপমা গানের বর্ণনার সঙ্গীভূত, তা বাহিরের বস্তু নয়। তাকে বিশুদ্ধ করে নেওয়া যায় না। উপমাপ্রয়োগের এই কালে তা অপরের ক্ষেত্রে দোষণীয় হতে পারত, কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রাণোৎকোশলে ও নিমিত-নৈপুণ্যে তা স্বাভাবিক হয়ে উঠেছে।

উপমা যে কবিতার একচেটিয়া বস্তু নয়, তা যে গানের অধিকারেও আছে, তার সত্যতা এখানে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হচ্ছে। আমরা দৈনন্দিন জীবনে নিম্নতই অজ্ঞাতসারে উপমা প্রয়োগ করি। সে ব্যাপারে আমরা গাঢ়তন নই বলেই তা আমাদের শ্রুতি এড়িয়ে যায়। অথচ মা যখন তার শিশুর 'গোবন্দায়ানা' বলেন, বা বন্ধু যখন বন্ধুকে আদর করে সম্ভাষণ করে তখন সে অজ্ঞাতেই উপমা প্রয়োগ করে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই স্বভাব-সত্যকে তাঁর লেখায় স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছিল।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপমা-ব্যবহারে আরো-একটি লক্ষণীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য—তার অনাড়ম্বর সহজ গতি। সংস্কৃত ও প্রাকৃত উপমার চিত্রাচারিত নিম্প্রাণ কৃত্তিক তিমি গ্রহণ করেন নি। গজেন্দ্র-গামিনী নায়িকা বা বৃষস্ক নাগদের রূপবর্ণনায় তাঁর আগ্রহ নেই। রত্নাকর বা বিদ্যাবরের প্রতি তাঁর কোনো কৌতুহল নেই। চেনা মপারের বিচিত্র চলচ্চিত্র থেকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ উপাদান সংগ্রহ করে জীবনের ফ্রেমে তাদের বসায়খভাবে স্থাপনা করেছেন। তার ফলে রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপমা স্বাভাবিক সৌন্দর্যে পাঠকচিত্তকে অভিযুক্ত করেছে।



রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রকৃতি-চেতনা ও তার নেপথ্য-ভুবন

শুদ্ধাসত্ত্ব বসু

রবীন্দ্রকবীর দুটি মূল পেরখা : প্রকৃতিপ্রীতি ও মানবপ্রেম। এখানে তাঁর প্রকৃতিপ্রীতির পশ্চাৎপট সম্পর্কে আংশিক আলোচনা করছি। কাব্যে প্রকৃতিপ্রীতির কথা থাকলেও কবি নিজে তাঁর প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কে যেখানে বরা দিয়েছেন, কি গ্রন্থে বা পত্র—আমরা শুধু তারই আলোচনা করছি। জীবনস্মৃতিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে তাঁর প্রকৃতিপ্রীতির পশ্চাৎপট সম্পর্কে আংশিক আলোচনা করছি। কাব্যে প্রকৃতিপ্রীতির কথা থাকলেও কবি নিজে তাঁর উল্লেখ করেছেন যে বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির সংগে তাঁর প্রথম পরিচয় ঘটে : তাঁর জীবনের উদ্যোগ-পর্বের একটি বিরাট অনুভব তিনি ‘ডিমপত্র’ গ্রন্থেও বিশ্লেষণ করেছেন। প্রকৃতির সংগে তাঁর নিবিড় সান্নিধ্য তাঁকে প্রকৃতির মমলোকের এক অজ্ঞাত উপলব্ধির সন্ধান দিয়েছে, —তিনি যেমন মুগ্ধ বিস্ময়ে বহিঃপ্রকৃতির অভিব্যক্তিতে আনন্দ লাভ করেছেন, তেমনই প্রকৃতির অন্তলোকের জীবনও তাঁর কাছে স্পষ্টভূত হয়েছে। প্রকৃতি আমাদের কাছে, সাধারণ মানুষের কাছে—তার বহিঃসত্তার রূপ নিয়ে বরা দেয়, কিন্তু কবির কাছে প্রকৃতি তার স্বরূপে শুধু অবস্থিত নয়, শুধু আত্মপালা নদীপর্বত, জীবনজন্মের মধ্যেই বাস করে না, তাঁর অদ্বৈত ব্যাকুলতার সন্ধান খান্নিয়ে তোলে, অজ্ঞাতপূর্ব আনন্দের একটি অদ্বৈত প্রভাবে তাঁর অন্তরে অন্তরে প্রভাস এনে দেয়, তখন কবি তাঁর চতুঃপাশের জগৎ ও জীবন থেকে প্রকৃতিকে আলাদা করে দেখেন। প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কে তাই সাধারণ মানুষের উপলব্ধি যখন Physical, রবীন্দ্রনাথের তখন Physical এবং Meta-physical, এই Metaphysical দৃষ্টি কিংবা কবি ‘সোনার তরী’ যুগে স্পষ্টই উপলব্ধি করেছেন, এবং ডিমপত্রের প্রত্নাবলীতে এই প্রত্যয়ের স্পষ্ট প্রকাশ।

‘ডিমপত্র’ এই কারণে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাব জীবনের উপলব্ধিতে একটি অনিবার্য ও অবশ্যপাঠ গ্রন্থ। ‘ডিমপত্র’ তাঁর পত্র সাফলন—এবং এই চিঠিগুলি মোটামুটি ১৮৮৫ সাল থেকে ১৮৯৫ সালের মধ্যে লেখা। সাধারণ মানুষের কাছে চিঠির যে অর্থ, রবীন্দ্রনাথের পত্র বলতে কিংবা চিঠির সেই অর্থ বোঝায় না। ব্যক্তি-জীবনের বাস্তব দিককে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পত্র তেমন মর্যাদা দেননি, কিন্তু পত্রের সাধারণ কথাবার্তার মধ্যে তার অন্তরের বহু অনুভূতি-লোক উদ্ঘাটিত হয়েছে। আর এ দিক থেকে ডিম পত্রের চিঠিগুলি একেবারে আদর্শ। কারণ পাঠক সাধারণের জন্যে কবি এখানে তাঁর মনের অনুভবকে ব্যক্ত করেননি, শুধুমাত্র একটি মানুষের কাছেই তিনি নিজেকে বরা দিতে চেয়েছেন। তাই প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কে তাঁর উজ্জ্বল আঁপোরে হয়েছে, পোষাকী বসনের জোলুখে মিচ্ছ লালিতা খারিয়ে বসে নি।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের বহুপত্রের মধ্যে বহু অনুভূতির প্রকাশ বিবৃত

হয়েছে, কিন্তু তাঁর অন্তঃপ্রকৃতির কথা ডিমপত্র গ্রন্থেই বরা আছে। তাঁর মনে প্রকৃতি কি করে তার দৃশ্যগত সৌন্দর্য চাড়াও একটা আধ্যাত্মিক বাস্তবায়ন করিকে আপন করে প্রকৃতির রাঙ্ঘে তৈরী নিয়েছে—এর একটি স্পষ্ট পরিচয় রয়েছে। Wordsworth-এর ‘The Prelude’ বা ‘Tintern Abbey’ প্রভৃতি কবিতায় যেমন পাওয়া যায় কি কি অবস্থার মধ্যে দিয়ে Wordsworth প্রকৃতির মধ্যে থেকে আধ্যাত্মিক আনন্দলাভ করেছিলেন—তেমনি ডিমপত্রের মধ্যে দিয়েও রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিমানুষের অন্তর্জীবনের একটা স্তরের পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। ডিমপত্রের সাতাশ নম্বরের চিঠিখানার বর্ণনায় কথা এবং সেখানে বর্ণিত প্রকৃতির চিত্রের কথা একবার ভাবা যাক। কবি সেই নিশেচন্দ্র, নিশ্চন্দ্র, নিশ্চিহ্ন, নিরুদ্ধেশ প্রকৃতির মধ্যে একটা বৃহৎ সৌন্দর্যপূর্ণ নিষিকার উদার শাস্তি দেখেছেন। এর আগে কবি কবুল করেছেন—“অনেকদিন পরে আমার এই বৃদ্ধো পৃথিবীটির সংগে যেন দেখা-সাক্ষাৎ হলো। সেও বললে—এই যে। আমি বললুম—এই যে। তারপর দুজনে পাশাপাশি বসে আছি, আর কোন কথাবার্তা নেই।” ৩৪, ৩৫, ৩৬, ৩৭ নম্বর পত্রগুলিতে বিশেষ করে—এবং অন্যান্য প্রায় সমস্ত পত্রেরই তাঁর প্রকৃতিপ্রীতির কথা কিছু বরা পড়েছে।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশ্বাস করতেন প্রকৃতির সংগে মানুষের একটা নিকট ও নিবিড় সম্পর্ক রয়েছে। গোড়াতে অবশ্য দেখি প্রকৃতির স্বন্দর রূপ দেখে তিনি মুগ্ধ হয়েছেন, এবং তাঁর এই সৌন্দর্য-চেতনা তাঁকে প্রকৃতির এক অনির্দেশ্য সৌন্দর্যের কাগ্ননিক রাঙ্ঘে নিয়ে যেতে আকুল করেছে। সংক্ষেপে বললে বলা যায় যে প্রকৃতির সৌন্দর্যচেতনাই তাঁকে একপ সন্দরের কাছে পৌঁছবার কথা ধোয়না করেছে। সোনারতরী-চিত্রা যুগের কবিতাগুলির কথা স্মরণ করলেই তার প্রমাণ মিলবে।

প্রকৃতির চেতনা আর মানবীয় অনুভূতির একান্ত বিশ্বাস তিনি কেমন তখন ছিলেন—সে সম্পর্কে ডিমপত্রের ১৮ নম্বরের পত্রটি পাঠ করলে তা বোঝা যাবে। ঐ চিঠির একজায়গায় তিনি লিখছেন—“পৃথিবীর কাছ থেকে আমরা যে সব পৃথিবীর ধন পেয়েছি এমন কি কোন স্বর্গ থেকে পেতুম। স্বর্গ আর কী দিত জানিনে, কিন্তু এমন কোমলতা-দুর্বলতায় এমন সস্করণ আশংকাভরা অপরিণত এই মানুষগুলির মতো এমন আপনার ধন কোথা থেকে দিত। আমাদের এই মানির মা, আমাদের এই আপনাদের পৃথিবী, এর সোনার শস্যক্ষেত্রে, এর মেঘ-শালিনী নদীগুলির ধারে, এর সুখদুঃখের ভালবাসার লোকালয়ের মধ্যে এই সমস্ত দরিদ্র মর্ত্ত ছদয়ের অশ্রু ধনগুলিকে কোলো করে এনে দিয়েছে। আমরা হতভাগারা তাদের রাখতে

পারিনে, বাঁচতে পারিনে, নানা অশ্রু প্রবল শক্তি এসে বুকের কাছ থেকে তাদের ছিঁড়ে ছিঁড়ে নিয়ে যায়, কিন্তু বেচারী পৃথিবী যতদূর সাধ্য তা সে করেছে। আমি এই পৃথিবীকে ভালবাসি।”

কবি প্রকৃতিকে যত ভালবাসছেন—তত যেন তাঁর অস্ত্র-জীবনের দুর্বিষমত এক সুর খুঁজে পাচ্ছেন। দিনের শেষে—কাজকর্মের সব ঝামেলা চুকিয়ে কবি যখন পদ্মানদীর ওপর বোট কেদারাটেনে একলা বসেন আর বলেন—“তখন আমার আকাশে সেই সন্ধ্যা তারাটি ঘরের লোকের মত দেখা দেবে। আমি শীতের সময় যখন এই পদ্মা তীরে আসতুম, কাজরিপোকে ফিরতে অনেক দেরি হত। বোট ওপারে বালির চরের কাছে বাঁধা থাকত; ছোট জেলে ডিঙি চড়ে নিস্তর্র নদীটি পার হতুম, তখন এই সন্ধ্যাটি স্রষ্টার অচ্যুত স্রষ্টামুখে আমার জন্যে অপেক্ষা করে থাকতো। এখানকার প্রকৃতির সংগে সেই আমার একটি মানবিক যরকমার সম্পর্ক।” ১১২ নম্বর চিঠিখানি এই প্রসঙ্গে লক্ষণীয়।

কবির অস্ত্রজীবনের এই সুরটি, প্রকৃতির সংগে তাঁর অনুরঞ্জিত ইতিহাস—যা তিনি ‘জীবন স্মৃতি’ গ্রন্থে উল্লেখ করেছেন মাত্র—তার স্পষ্ট বর্ণনা আমরা ছিন্নপত্র গ্রন্থে পাচ্ছি। “শ্যাম” নামক ভোতার অধীনে থেকে জানালা দিয়ে দেখা পুকুর বারে বটে গোছের বিস্তৃতির মাধ্যমে রবীন্দ্রনাথ কেমন করে কালনিক ব্যাপ্তির একটা দিশস্তব্যাপী আনন্দময় পোতেন—সে কথা জীবন স্মৃতিতে বেলেন—“সে বটে এখন কোথায়?... আর সেই বালক আজ বাড়িয়া উঠিয়া নিজের চারিদিক হইতে নানা প্রকারের ঝুরি নামাইয়া দিয়া বিপুল জটিলতার মধ্যে জ্বলন দ্বন্দ্বিতা ছায়া—রৌদ্রপাত গমনা করিতেছে।” জীবনস্মৃতির “বাহিরে যাত্রা” নিবন্ধে তিনি লিখছেন—“প্রত্যহ প্রভাতে মুন হইতে উঠিলাম। এই আমার কেমন মনে হইত যেন দিনটিকে সোনারীপাড় দেওয়া নতুন চিঠির মতো পাইলাম।”

এই সুরই ছিন্নপত্রে লিরিক হয়ে বেজেছে। শরৎকালের সৌন্দর্যে তিনি আত্মহারা হয়ে বেলেন—“এই শরতের অপরাধ শান্তি মধ্যে আমার আত্মকে স্তরে স্তরে গিল করে দেওয়া আমার পক্ষে কম ব্যাপার নয়। এ জীবনে আমার যাকিছু গভীরতম তৃপ্তি ও প্রীতির সঙ্গে কেবল এই রকম নির্জন স্বপ্নের মুহূর্তে পুঞ্জীভূত ভাবে আমার কাছে ধরা দেয়।”

প্রকৃতি চেতনার একটা ক্রম-পরিণতি যেমন লক্ষ্য করা যায় ছিন্ন পত্রের যোড়া থেকে শেষ পর্যন্ত, তেমনি তাঁর লিরিক-মানসের একটা স্রষ্ট প্রকাশও চোখে পড়ে। প্রকৃতি গোড়াতে কবির কাছে বস্তু মতের মতো দেখা দিয়েছে, তারপর সে হয়ে উঠেছে স্বপ্ন, কিন্তু সর্বশেষে আমরা দেখি প্রকৃতির মধ্যে কবির অস্ত্রের এক নিবিড় অবসান—এবং কবি প্রকৃতির জগৎ থেকে একটি মহান মতের সন্ধান করে ফিরছেন। অবশেষে এই প্রকৃতির প্রভাবেই কবি যেন নিজের মনোলোকে এক মহান শিল্পীর পদসংলগ্ন শুনতে পাচ্ছেন। তাঁকে তিনি আমার করে নিতে পারছেন। ছিন্নপত্রের এক থেকে একশো বায়ামগান পত্রে এই খবরই আমরা পাই। আর সেই খবর অসাধারণ অনাস্বাদিতপূর্ব সাহিত্যরসের মাধ্যমেই আমরা পাই। “সূর্য আস্তে আস্তে ডোরের বেলা পূর্বদিক থেকে কী এক প্রকাণ্ড গ্রন্থের পাতা খুলে দিচ্ছে এবং সন্ধ্যায় পশ্চিম থেকে বীরে বীরে আকাশের উপরে যে এক প্রকাণ্ড পাখী উলটে দিচ্ছে সেই বা কী আশ্চর্য-লিখন—আর এই, ক্ষীণ পরিসর নদী আর এই দিগন্তবিস্তৃততর,

যার ওই ছবির মতন পরপার, ধরণীর এই উপেক্ষিত একটি প্রান্তভাগ, এহা কী বৃহৎ নিস্তর্র নিস্তৃত পাঠশালা।” “মাখানি জানবার ওপর রেখে দিই, বাতাস প্রকৃতির স্নেহ হস্তের মতো আশে আশে আমার চুলের মধ্যে আঙ্গুল বুলিয়ে দেয়, জল ঢুল ঢুল শব্দ করে বয়ে যায়, জ্যোৎস্না ঝিক ঝিক করতে থাকে এবং অনেক সময় ‘জলে নরন আপনি ভেসে যায়।’” “রূপণ জেলের দিকে মা যেমন করে তাকায় প্রকৃতি সেই রকম স্রষ্টার স্তর্র এবং স্নিক্র বিধাদের সংগে আমার মুখের দিকে চেয়েছিল, নদীর জল আকাশের মতো স্থির এবং আমাদের দুটি বাঁধা নৌকো জলচর সাধির মতো মুখের উপর পাখা বেঁধে স্থির ভাবে ঘুরিয়ে আছে।” “আমার সমস্ত মনটিকে কে যেন তুলিতে করে তুলে নিয়ে এই রঙিন শরৎ প্রকৃতির উপর আর এক পৌচ রঙের মতো মাথিয়ে দিচ্ছে—তাকে করেই এই সমস্ত নীল সবুজ এবং সোনার উপর আর-একটা যেন মেশার রঙ লেখে গেছে।” “সূর্যালোকে আত্মকের প্রকৃতিকে ভাবি একটি গুরুবসনা মহিমাবীর মহামুদীর মতো দেখাচ্ছে। এই রকম সকাল বেলায় মনে হয়,

—নাই মোর পূর্বাপর

যেন আমি একদিনে উঠেছি কান্নায়

অরণ্যের পিতৃনাতুহীন কুল!

যেন আমি এই আকাশের, এই নদীর, এই পুরাতন শ্যামল পৃথিবীর।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রকৃতির সংগে এই যে একার চিন্তা—তা তিনি তাঁর সমগ্র কবিতাতেই স্বীকার করেছেন, এদো প্রভাত-সংগীত প্রমুখ নিবন্ধে, জীবনস্মৃতির স্বানে স্বানে এবং ছিন্নপত্রের সর্বত্র তাঁর প্রকৃতি চেতনার পটভূমি আলোচনা করেছেন। মানুষ প্রকৃতির স্বরূপের সৌন্দর্য উপলব্ধি করেই প্রকৃতির অস্ত্র-লৌকে প্রবেশের সোনার চানিটা আন্নার করে ফেলে। মানুষের তখন বুঝতে বাকী থাকে না যে প্রকৃতির স্বরূপসৌন্দর্যের মাধ্যমে দিয়েই বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির মোহন রাজ্যে সে প্রবেশ করতে পারবে। বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির সংগে মানুষের স্নেহপ্রেমের একটা চিরকালের বন্ধন আছে, এই সুর “সোনার তরী”র অনেক কবিতাতেই রবীন্দ্রনাথে ঘোষণা করেছেন। প্রকৃতি আর মানুষ একেবারে এক—কোথায় যেন উভয়ে মেহেপ্রেমের ডোরে নিবিড়ভাবে বাঁধা। এই বন্ধনের রবীন্দ্রনাথ “সমুদ্রের প্রতি” কবিতায় বিশেষ করে ঘোষণা করেছেন। কিন্তু ছিন্নপত্রে বলেন—“আমি বেশ মনে করতে পারি, বহুদূর পূর্বে যখন তরুণী পৃথিবী সমুদ্রস্রোত থেকে সবে মাথা তুলে উঠে তখনকার নবীন সূর্যকে বন্দনা করছেন, তখন আমি এই পৃথিবীর নতুন মানচিত্রে কোথা থেকে এক প্রথম জীবনোচ্চাসে গাছ হয়ে পল্লবিত হয়ে উঠে-ছিলুম। তখন জীবজন্তু ছিল না, বৃহৎ সমুদ্র দিনরাত্রি দুলছে, এবং অরোহ মাতার মতো আপনীর নলজাত ক্ষুদ্র মুমুকো, মাঝে মাঝে উন্মত্ত আলিঙ্গনে একেবারে আবৃত করে ফেলেছে—তখন আমি এই পৃথিবীতে আমার সর্বাংগ দিয়ে প্রথম সূর্যালোক পান করেছিলুম, নব শিশুর মতো একটা অল্প জীবনের পুনকে নীলানন্দ তলে আন্দোলিত হয়ে উঠেছিলুম, এই আমার মানির মাতাকে সমস্ত শিকড়গুলি দিয়ে জড়িয়ে এর স্তন্যরস পান করেছিলুম। একটা মূঢ় আনন্দে আমার কুল কুঁচিৎ এবং নবপত্র উদ্যত হতো।—তারপরেও নবনব মুখে এই পৃথিবীর মানিতে আমি জন্মেছি।

রবীন্দ্র জন্ম শতবার্ষিকী স্মারক গ্রন্থ

কলিকাতা মিউনিসিপ্যাল গেজেট

আমরা দুজনে একলা মুখোমুখি করে বসলেই আমাদের সেই বচকালের পরিচয় যেন অগ্নে অগ্নে মনে পড়ে।”

কবি প্রকৃতির সংগে জন্মান্তরীণ এই প্রথমতম উপলব্ধির বন্ধনে নিজেদের বেধেছেন। রোমান্টিক কবি-মানসের এই অভিব্যক্তিতে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পাশ্চাত্য দেশের কাছে স্বার্থী নন। তিনি শিশুকাল থেকেই প্রকৃতি সম্পর্কে একটি বিশেষ ধারণা পোষণ করেছেন—তাই তাঁর প্রভাতসংগীত, সন্ধ্যা-সংগীত প্রভৃতি পাখমিক প্রদত্তচিত্তেও প্রকৃতি মূক বা জড় নয়, প্রাণচেতনার একটি স্পর্শ রয়েছে দেখা যায়—যে ধারণার কথা তিনি বিশেষ করে ছিন্নপত্রগুণে ব্যক্ত করেছেন। রোমান্টিক কবির প্রকৃতির স্বরূপ নির্ণয়ের এই ব্যাকুলতা এবং তাঁর প্রকৃতি চেতনার ভিত্তি-ভূমি বিস্তৃত রয়েছে চিন্নপত্র গ্রন্থে। কেননা এই গ্রন্থের একটিপক্ষে কবির স্পষ্ট ঘোষণা রয়েছে যে কবি যখন পৃথিবীর সংগে এক হয়ে ছিলেন, তখন তাঁর ওপর সবুজ ঘাস জন্মাত, শরীরে আলো পড়তো, সূর্য-নিকরনে তাঁর অঙ্গুণ বিস্তৃত শ্যামল অঙ্গের প্রথমে রৌমকূপ থেকে সৌন্দর্যের স্তম্ভ উদ্ভূত উদ্ভিত হতে থাকতো। তিনি যেন কত দেশদেশান্তরের জনপদপর্বত ব্যাপ্ত করে

উজ্জ্বল আকাশের নিচে নিস্তব্ধভাবে গুয়ে পড়ে থাকতেন।

এই হচ্ছে কবির প্রকৃতি চেতনার একদিকের কথা। শরৎ কালের সূর্যলোকে কবির সর্বাংগে একটি আনন্দরস, একটি জীবনী শক্তি অত্যন্ত অব্যক্ত অর্পণে এবং অত্যন্ত প্রকাণ্ডভাবে সঞ্চারিত হতে থাকতো—কবি সেই উপলব্ধি আজো স্মরণ করতে পারেন। তিনি নিজেই বলেছেন—“যেন আমার এই চেতনার প্রবাহ পৃথিবীর প্রত্যেক ঘাসে এবং গাছের শিকড়ে শিকড়ে শিরায় শিরায় ধীরে ধীরে প্রবাহিত হচ্ছে—সমস্ত শস্যক্ষেত্র রোমান্থিত হয়ে উঠছে এবং নারকেল গাছের প্রত্যেক পাতা জীবনের আবেগ খর খর করে কাঁপছে। এই পৃথিবীর উপর আমার যে একটি আন্তরিক আত্মীয়-বৎসলতার ভাব আছে, ইচ্ছা করে যৌন ভালো করে প্রকাশ করতে।”

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যখনই প্রকৃতির রূপরস গন্ধস্পর্শ সম্পর্কে চিন্তা করতে বসেছেন—তখনই তিনি নিজের সংগে বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির একটি অবিচ্ছিন্ন বোঁগ উপলব্ধি করেছেন, এক চিরপুরাতন একাগ্রতা তাঁকে একান্তভাবে আকর্ষণ করেছে। এই হলো তাঁর প্রকৃতি নেপথ্য-ভূবন।

বৃদ্ধচেতনাদিগে কবিক্রমে দেহায়ারোপ হয়েছে। কালিদাস শুধুই কবি। তথাপি নিস্তান পাননি কিংবদন্তী তাঁকে বাণদেবীর সাক্ষাৎ বরপূত্র বানিয়েছে। রবীন্দ্রচরিত্রে এরকম পরিণাম হবে এমন আশঙ্কা করি না। সববিশ অতিকথার বিরুদ্ধে তিনি যা লিখে রেখেছেন তাই তাঁকে অমানবতা থেকে রক্ষা করবে।

রবীন্দ্র-রচনা অতি বিশাল, রবীন্দ্র বিষয়ে যে-সাহিত্য লিখিত হয়েছে তাও অল্প নয়, কালক্রমে তা আরও বাড়বে। কবির সঙ্গে যাদের সাক্ষাৎ পরিচয় ঘটেছে তাদের অত্যন্তে আরও চল্লিশ পঞ্চাশ বৎসর বাঁচবেন এবং তাদের দ্বারা রবীন্দ্রতত্ত্ব বিবর্তিত হবে। তা ছাড়া কবির সহস্রা পত্র, অসংখ্য পত্রিক্তি, স্বরচিত অনেক চিত্র বিকীর্ণ হয়ে আছে, তাঁর গানে দেশ প্রানিত হয়েছে। তাঁর কষ্টস্বপ্নও যন্ত্রণিত হয়ে স্থায়ী হয়েছে। এই সমস্তের সমবায় যে বিপুল রবীন্দ্র পরিবেশ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে তাতে রবীন্দ্র রচনার সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রাচার নির্বিড় সংযোগ অক্ষয় করে থাকবে। তিনি মহা অজানায় প্রহান করলেও আমাদের কাছে চিরকাল জীবিতবৎ প্রত্যক্ষ থাকবেন।

যে মহৎ উত্তরাধিকার তিনি আমাদের জন্য রেখে গেলেন তা কি আমরা বর্নীর জড় সত্ত্বানের মত পরম আলস্যে শুধুই হাত পেতে নেব? কবির কাছে আমাদের যে ধর্ম তা শাশ্বত নিঃশব্দের ভূমি গুহতার, কেবল ভাবের উজ্জ্বলতা তা শোণ হবে না। যে কর্ম তাঁর জীবনের বৃত্ত ছিল, যার জন্য তাঁর ভাবনার অস্ত ছিল না, নিশ্চয়ই তাঁর রূপ তাঁর সেই, আরক কর্ম যদি অবিস্মরণে সমবেত চেতনায় স্বেচ্ছায় হয় তবেই আমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ সার্থক

—রাজশেখর বসু।

রবীন্দ্রচিন্তায় ব্রাহ্মণ ও ব্রহ্মবাদ

অমিয়রতন মুখোপাধ্যায়



বৈশ্যপ্রধান বস্তুতান্ত্রিক বিশ্বসমাজে ব্রাহ্মণ বা ব্রাহ্মণাদর্শের তেমন মর্যাদা নেই, এবং বলতে কি, মর্যাদা থাকার বা দেবার প্রশ্নই যেন নিতান্তই যেকোনো, সেই হেতু অপ্রাসঙ্গিক। দায় গ্রহণ করার বা দায়িত্ব স্বীকার করার চেয়ে দাবীর কথাটিই যে-যেখানে উচ্চকণ্ঠে, হাজারো কণ্ঠে ঘোষিত হয়, সমাধিত হয়, সে-যেখানে তাগের কথা, প্রেমের কথা তথা তাগপ্রবৃত্তি কি প্রেমপ্রবৃত্তি মানুষের কথা অর্থাৎ ব্রাহ্মণাদর্শের কথা উপেক্ষিত হবে যে, হয় যে, আমি জানি।সাম্প্রতিক সমাজে 'ব্রাহ্মণ' শব্দটির তাই ভার বা ধার তেমন আর নেই। আপাতো বিচারে মনেও হয় বর্তমান পৃথিবীতে ব্রাহ্মণ সমাজ তেমন ভক্তি ও শ্রদ্ধা আকৃষ্ট করেই না।

তবু বলি, একটি ধীরভাবে ভেবে দেখলে বোঝাও যায়, যে স্বার্থসর্বস্ব এই ব্রহ্মবাদী সংসারে ব্রাহ্মণ আছেন—এবং উন্নত স্বভাবের দিব্য মহিমায় মানবসমাজের আধ্যাত্মিক একটি শ্রেণি আদর্শে অহরহ আকর্ষণও করছেন। হিংসার উন্নত এই পৃথ্বী ভ্রমে প্রেমমন্ত্রে ও অহিংসা মন্ত্রে যারা দীক্ষিত, জীবন দিয়ে যারা বিশ্ব মানুষকে সন্যাসের আদর্শতত্ত্ব শিক্ষা দেন, তারা কি ব্রাহ্মণ নন? পরমতাত্ত্বিকতা যাদের স্বভাবে, 'অদ্বৈত সর্বভূতানাং' যেসব মহাত্মা, মিথ্যাচারী এই সমাজ-সংসারের বহুবাদী 'শ্রুতি মেজরটির' সম্মুখেই যারা সত্যের জন্য দেন আত্মবলি, অসংখ্য 'মারের' বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম করে যারা ঘোষণা করেন মানবজীবনের আদর্শতত্ত্বঃ 'সংগোমে মে মতং শ্রেয়ো যং চৈতীবে পরাজিতো'—তারা কি শুধু সেকালের সত্য ত্রেতা দ্বাপরের, আমাদের কালের নন?....

ব্রাহ্মণ একটি জাতি বা সম্প্রদায় মাত্র নয়, ব্রাহ্মণ একটি ভাব, একটি আদর্শ। ব্রাহ্মণাদর্শ অন্তরে বাহিরে পতিভাত করে' মানব সমাজে যিনি মানুষের মত মানুষ, তিনি ব্রাহ্মণানব, তিনি ব্রাহ্মণ।....স্পষ্টে কথায়—সত্যে যার দীক্ষা, পেয়ে বিশ্বাস, মজ্জলে অভিনয়, স্তম্ভের রচি, সংযমে স্তম্ভের এবং ক্রমায় দেবাদপি গরীয়ান—তিনি ব্রাহ্মণ, নীচ কূলে জন্মগ্রহণ করেও তিনি ব্রাহ্মণোত্তম।....বিপবংশে জন্মগ্রহণ করার সোভাগ্যে যিনি ব্রাহ্মণ, ধর্মানিষ্টানের দ্বারা যজ্ঞেরপবীত ধারণ করে' যিনি দ্বিজ নামে অভিহিত, সামাজিক বিচারে তিনি ব্রাহ্মণ হলেও মনোবোধনা ও ন্যায়সাধনার মহিমায় ব্রাহ্মণশিত কর্ম করে' তাকেও সত্যকরে ব্রাহ্মণ হয়ে উঠতে হয়।....সাধনার আশীর্বাদে অ-ব্রাহ্মণও ব্রাহ্মণ পদবাচ্য এবং সাধনার অভাবে ব্রাহ্মণও ব্রাহ্মণে জাত কুমারও অ-ব্রাহ্মণ।....

সমাজের অন্তর্ভুক্তদের প্রেমের আনন্দে কোল দিতে যারা জানেন, দস্তের কু-সংস্কার মানস বলে বিদূষিত করে' বিনয়শূন্য চরিত্রপ্রকাশে যারা স্তম্ভসিদ্ধ, যুদ্ধপীড়িত ক্ষত্রিয়-পৃথিবীকে শান্ত ও সংযত করার সাধনায় বীতভীত মনো যারা কঠোর সংগ্রামী,

মোতদীন বৈশ্যিক মনোভাবের নিশ্চয় আকাশে সমুদ্রের জ্যোতি-বিস্মরণে যারা ক্রান্তিহীন—তিনি-আমি তাদের উপেক্ষা করলেও তারা ছিলেন, আছেন, থাকেন—হেরেও তারা হারেন না, মরেও তারা মরেন না, পোকেরে বলে' পরিহসিত ও প্রতিক্রিয়ামূলক বলে' অতি-নিম্নিত হওয়া সত্ত্বেও তারা চলেন—বস্তুপিও আচ্ছন্ন বদ্ধ ওচ্ছাসিত বন্দী জীবনকে মুক্ত করার অভিপ্রায়ে তাদের অভিযাত্রা।....তারা শুধু এ-দেশের নয়, বিশ্বদেশের; এ-যুগের নয়, বিশ্বযুগের।....মনুষ্যজন্মের মাহাত্ম্যবিকাশে, ব্রাহ্মণজন্মের অনন্য মহিমাবিকাশে তারা একাদান ও সিদ্ধকামঃ সত্য-প্রিয়তা, ন্যায়বর্ষ, বিশ্বলোকজিতায় তাগবৈরাগ্য, সর্দজ্যতি ও জীবে সমদর্শন, অব্যয়ন-অব্যাপনা, সর্বাঙ্গের সর্বভূত ব্রহ্মদর্শনের প্রাক্ত আনন্দে ভেদবুদ্ধি ও অস্পৃশ্যতাকে সর্বতোভাবে পরিহার—তাদের চরিত্র-বৈশিষ্ট্য। নীচবংশজ হেরেও, ভিন্নস্ত জাতিক হেরেও সত্যকার ব্রাহ্মণবর্গের তারা প্রথম, তাঁরা ব্রাহ্মণ।....তাঁরা থাকেন এবং আছেন বলেই পৃথিবী আজও ঠিক আছে।

রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্য ও দর্শনে এই ব্রাহ্মণের প্রভাব প্রমিধানযোগ্য।

মৈত্রিকী তপশ্চর্যা ও ব্রাহ্মণাদর্শের মহিমায় নিকাম কর্ম সমাপনাত্তে যিনি ব্রাহ্মণ—সমাজের তিনি পূজনীয়। কিন্তু ব্রাহ্মণদের অংকারে অনেক ব্রাহ্মণিষ্ঠা, তাগসাধনা, ন্যায়বর্ষ ও সত্যবৃত্তকে যিনি অঙ্গীকার করেন তিনি কি ব্রাহ্মণ?—রবীন্দ্র নাথের এই জিজ্ঞাসা। মহাভারতের কণ্ঠকে অভিন্নমাত্র দিয়ে পরশুরাম—অথবা একলব্যকে কৌশলে শক্তিশীন-করার কু-নীতিকথায় দ্রোণাচার্য—ব্রাহ্মণোচিত কর্ম করেন নি—তাঁরা জন্মব্রাহ্মণ হলেও ভাব-ব্রাহ্মণ নন। অপরপক্ষে ধামি গৌতম (চিহ্নাঃ ব্রাহ্মণ ভ্রষ্টব্য) নীচবংশজ সত্যকামকে ব্রাহ্মণ বলে' স্বীকার করে' গরল সেই সত্যচারীকেই কি শুধু ভাতে ভুগেছেন, নিজেও সত্যতর ব্রাহ্মণ্য দিব্যতার মহানন্দে উন্নীত হন নি?

মন যখন ব্রাহ্মণ-ভাব, অনুভব করে, যেন ভাব-ভাবে তা ব্রহ্মই হয়ে যায়, অর্থাৎ বৃহত্তমেরো বৃহত্তর আদর্শের আলোয় সূর্যবর্ষ প্রাপ্ত হয়।....মনের নিজের কোনো রঙ নেই, অস্তিত্ব নেই, সভা নেই। 'যা' সে ধরে তাই সে হয়। যদি 'কাম' ধরে—কামের ভাবাবেগে বিশেষ এক রূপ ধরে, বিশেষ এক সত্যকে স্বীকার করে; যদি 'তাগ' ধরে—তবে তাগের ভাবানন্দে বিশেষ এক আনন্দ প্রাপ্ত হয়, বিশেষ এক সত্যের আলোকে হয় আলোকিত।....যা ধরে থাকি, ধরে ধরে 'হয়ে' উঠি—শ্রমসে তাই ধর্ম। কী ধরে মন হয়ে উঠে—তত্ত্বিকের এটা পিচাই।

ছোট কিছু ধরি তো ছোট হই, সংকীর্ণ হই; বড় ধরি তো বড়-ভাব ভাবি, উপার হই, হই বিস্তৃত।...ব্রাহ্ম হচ্ছে সকল আদর্শের বড় আদর্শ, বৃহত্তমেরো বৃহত্তর আদর্শ,—এ আদর্শ কত বড়, কী তার সৃষ্ট স্বজরা ভেবে-চিন্তে বলা শক্ত। তবে ব্রহ্মদর্শনের ও সাধুসাধকদ্বোইতিহাসে দেখা গেছে—এ-আদর্শের আভাসটুকু পাওয়ামাত্র মন হয় আকাশের মত অসীম-অনন্ত, সমুদ্রের মত অতল-গভীর, আগুনের মত নিম্পাপ-বিস্তৃত। ভারতীয় ধর্মিয়া তাই ব্রহ্মদর্শকেই জীবনসাধনায় স্থান দেন। 'যা পেয়ে অমৃত হব, তাই প্রার্থনা করি। যা পেয়ে অমৃত হব না তা' নিয়ে আমার কী হবে—এই হচ্ছে ব্রহ্মবাদিনী ভারত-প্রকৃতির বাণী।

ব্রহ্মকে চেড়ে যে-ব্রহ্মবোধ—সে-বোধ মনকে বদ্ধ করে, সংকীর্ণ করে, ভারতীয়ের তাই না সাধা নয়, কাম্য নয়। ব্রহ্মকে জগৎকে, জীবজীবনকে ব্রাহ্মভাবে, বৃহৎভাবে, গ্রহণ-করার আনন্দই মনকে মোহমুক্ত রাখতে পারে। তখন ব্রহ্মর ওপর ব্রহ্মই অর্থাৎ আদর্শ-ভাবটিই প্রাধান্য পায় বলে ব্রহ্মজগৎ মনকে বাঁধতে পারে না। যোহমুক্ত মন ব্রহ্মকে উপেক্ষা করে না সত্য, কিন্তু বিশেষ কোনো ব্রহ্মবিষয়ে লিপ্ত হয়ে সংকীর্ণ হতেও চায় না।...রবীন্দ্রনাথের মনোদর্শনে ব্রাহ্মবাদের তাই তত্ত্বপ্রাধান্য।

ব্রহ্মকে মনের দ্বারা অনুভব ও আশ্রয় করতে গিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রেমের কথা উত্থাপন করেছেন। মনের জগতে প্রেমই হচ্ছে বৃহত্তম আদর্শ। প্রেম হলে মন শুদ্ধ হয়, ভেদাভেদ তুচ্ছ করে মিলনমৈত্রীতে আসা রাখে, সমদর্শনে জাগায় শ্রদ্ধা। ব্রাহ্মদর্শ বা প্রেমদর্শ চরিত্রে প্রতিভাত করলে তবেই মানুষ, যে-কোনো জাতের যে-কোনো মানুষ, হয় ব্রাহ্মমানব, হয় ব্রাহ্মণ। প্রেম নেই তো ব্রাহ্ম নেই, ব্রাহ্মণও নেই। সাম্প্রতিক নিষেধম সমাজের স্বার্থাঙ্গ মানবগোষ্ঠির পক্ষেই নাস্তিক্য সম্ভব, ব্রাহ্মণ অবাস্তব, সেই হেতু উপেক্ষার ব্রহ্ম, পরিহাসের সামগ্রী।...

তর্কসাপেক্ষ হলেও এ-তথ্য সত্য যে, সংারে সবাই নিষেধম নয়, ভাগ্যদর্শে অবিশ্রুণীও নয়, সম জন্মজন্মে তথা মানবমজ্জলে অসাড় বা উদাসীনও নয়। স্বার্থ-সর্বস্ব মানুষের সমাজেও আছে ব্রাহ্মমানব, উপেক্ষিত হয়েও অচলা যাদের ব্রহ্মনিষ্ঠা অর্থাৎ কায়েনমনসীবাচ্য সর্বতোমহৎ যাদের সৌজন্য, বিশ্বকল্যাণে প্রয়োবুদ্ধি, দেশমজ্জলে নিতাকর্ম, অহং-দমনে দিব্যরুচি, সর্ব-জগদগত প্রেমের আনন্দে 'নিরুদ্ধেশ্যাতা'।...চিন্তাসাধনার উচ্চস্তরে যারা উন্নীত, তাঁরা, কেবল তাঁরাই, জানেন—মানবজীবনে ব্রাহ্ম অবাস্তব কিছু কল্পবাপার নয়—মনোজীবনে পণ্ডিতের ভাব যেমন সত্য, ব্রাহ্মও তেমনি মানবমনোনিহিত সামান্য ব্যাপার, সেই হেতু বাস্তব ব্যাপার।...সাম্প্রতিক সমাজের কাছে কবির প্রশ্ন এইঃ লোকঠাকানোমিই কি বাস্তব, লোক কল্যাণটি নয়? আপনাদের শুধু ঘেরিয়া ঘেরিয়া পলে পলে ঘুরে-মরা আর বিকারের মীরচিকা জালে জড়িয়ে-মরা-টাই বাস্তব, 'মুক্ত করো হে বন্ধ'—এ-বোধ বাস্তব নয়, 'অসংখ্য বন্ধনযাবো লভিব মুক্তির স্বাদ'—আত্মপ্রত্যয়ের এই বীরবোধ নয় বাস্তব?....সামান্য কিছু নাম পেয়ে, অথবা মর্বাদা পেয়ে কিংবা স্ত্রযোগ পেয়ে 'স্বব' হওয়া বা 'স্ববারি' করাই বাস্তব—যা পেয়েছি, তারো চেয়ে ঢের বেশি কিছু দিতে-চাওয়ার মনোভাব নয় বাস্তব?কিছু পাবো তো দেব,—এই বৈশ্যভাব ছাড়া মানবজীবনে কি আর কোনো মহত্তর তাই নেই বলা? না-পেয়েও দেব, দেয়ার আনন্দে যাব দিয়ে—যারা আমার দান নিল, ধণী-ই করল

আমাকে, এ-ভাব কি শুধুই কবিত্ব মাত্র, নেই জীবনে?....যদি নেই তবে বৃহৎ-ভাব, ব্রহ্ম ভাব নেই আরঃ সংসারটা তবে হীন মনের মৃত শ্মশান, বিষয়বুদ্ধির দোকানঘর।

মৃত শ্মশানে জড়ত্বের স্ত্রযোগে প্রেতানুচরদের প্রাণোল্লাস, দোকানঘরে ভিড় জমলে বৈশ্যমনের উৎসাহ। প্রেতোল্লাসে ও বৈশ্যোৎসাহে যাদের মন ও মনন, স্বার্থবুদ্ধির অনুকুলে তাদের যুক্তি, সমর্থনী গোষ্ঠিগঠনে তাদের মতবাদ। 'সবের লোকা শুধিনো হোন্ত' কি 'স্বস্তিমানুষেভাঃ' কি 'পরোপকারায় শরীর-শরীরমেতৎ' কিংবাঃ

কী গাহিব, কী শুনাবে! বলা মিথ্যা আপনার স্তব,
মিথ্যা আপনার দুঃখ। স্বার্থমগ্না যে-জন বিমগ্ন
বৃহৎ জগৎ হতে সে কখনো শেখে নি বাঁচিতে।
মহাবিশ্বজীবনের তরঙ্গেতে নাচিতে নাচিতে
নির্ভয়ে ঢুটিতে হবে, সত্যের করিয়া প্রবর্তারা।
মৃত্যু করি না শঙ্কা।

(চিত্রাঃ এবার ফিরাও মোরে)

—এ-সব তত্ত্ববাণী বৈশ্যবিচারে ভাববাদীদের একেজো বাণী মাত্র, কার্যোদ্ধারের অভিপ্রায়ে মুখেই আউড়ানো যায়, চরিত্রে প্রতিভাত করার সত্যের আস্থা স্থাপন করা যায় না।...রবীন্দ্র বাণী তাই মুখেই আনতে পারি, রবীন্দ্রকাব্যের প্রশংসা জনসমাজে করতেও পারি, কিন্তু জীবনে আনতে পারি না, অর্থাৎ ভেতর থেকে হয়ে উঠে, জেগে-উঠে দ্বিজ হওয়ার—বিষয়গত মন থেকে মঙ্গলগত মনে জন্মলাভ করে দ্বিজ হওয়ার—সাধনা যেন করতেই পারি না! অথচ এ-কথা আজ কে না জানে যে, রবীন্দ্রসাধনা দ্বিজত্বের সাধনা, নবজন্মের সাধনা যা আছি তা নয়, চিন্তাসাধনার সর্বোচ্চস্তরে উন্নীত হওয়ার আনন্দে যা হওয়া সম্ভব, মানুষ হিসাবে হওয়া সম্ভব—তার ভাব-চেতনায় জন্ম নেয়ার, প্রকাশিত-হওয়ার বেদনাবোধ-ই রবীন্দ্রত্ব, ভারতীয় ভাষায় দ্বিজত্ব, ব্রাহ্মণত্ব। এই ব্রাহ্মণত্বে, মানবিক মহাহত্যা-বিকাশের আনন্দেত্তে, আবার বলি, সকল দেশের, সকল মানুষের অধিকার।...

আর্যশাস্ত্রে অন্যর্থাৎ-ও যেমন ক্রমশ আর্ঘ্য করে নেয়ার বিধি আছে (শ্রুত্ব আর্ঘ্যমর্ধ্যম্)—রবীন্দ্রশাস্ত্রের-ও তেমনি অ-ব্রাহ্মণকে শিল্লবোধের তথা রসবোধের বিকাশে ব্রাহ্মণ করে নেয়ার আনন্দ আছে।...গুরু উপদেশে নয়, কবিগুরুর প্রেমাদর্শের চেতনায় তিনি পাঠক অন্তরে নবজীবনের দেবনা সঞ্চার করেন।...রবীন্দ্র-বাণীর তত্ত্ব-গভীরে সহসা হয়তো প্রবেশ করতে আমরা পারি না, কিন্তু শিল্পগুণে মুগ্ধ যে হই, রসের পুলকে হৃদয়াবেগের যে ক্রান্তি ঘটে—সে-বিষয়ে কোনোই সন্দেহ নেই। যা নিয়ে আছি তা নিয়ে থাকলেও আরো কিছু বৃহত্তর জ্যোতিঃসম্পদ যে জীবনে-ই আছে, সে সম্বন্ধে কিছু না-কিছু আভাস যেন আসে। তখন বোঝাও যেন যায়, যে—দ্বিজত্বের দিব্যানুভাব দল বেঁধে—ক্লাস লেকচার শুনেই—অর্জন করা যায় না, একাকিত্বের আনন্দে জীবন-গভীরই তী অর্জন-করা সম্ভব।...আগে 'হওয়া' পরে 'করা'। হয়ে যে উঠেছে, সেই করতে পারে। হয়ে-ওঠার আদর্শই রবীন্দ্রনাথের আদর্শঃ ব্রাহ্মণের আদর্শ।

রবীন্দ্রকল্পনায় ব্রাহ্ম যেমন কর্মহীন নন, ব্রাহ্মানবও তেমনি নন কর্মহীন। অজয় অমঙ্গলের মধ্য দিয়েই ব্রাহ্ম দেব মঙ্গল-প্রকাশে যেমন কর্ম করছেন—বাইরের সহস্র আক্রমণ থেকে, লোভ, মোহ, কামনা, ছলনা জিগীষা, জিঘাংসা প্রভৃতি শূদ্রভাবে বৈশ্যচাকলা ও ক্ষত্রিয়বিকার থেকে—অন্তরের দ্বিত্যপ্রকাশে, শূচিপ্রকাশে ব্রাহ্মণ তেমনি সবার আড়ালে কর্ম করছেন, অর্থাৎ বাইরের অশুচিপ্রভাবে অন্তরকে অশুচি-করা নয়, অন্তরের শুচিতার দাক্ষিণ্যে বহির্জগৎকে মানব-সমাজের যোগাভূমি করার সংকল্প করছেন সাধনা করছেন।

ব্রাহ্মণ ব্রাহ্মণের কর্ম তাই নীরবে, নিভৃতে সংশ্লিষ্ট হচ্ছে না। হচ্ছে যে—এ-বিশ্বাস রাখা।

“অন্তরকে বাইরের আক্রমণ থেকে বাঁচাও।...থেকে থেকে ঘোরতর কর্ম-সংঘাতের মাঝখানেই নিজের অন্তরকে নিলিপ্ত বলে অনুভব করো। এই রকম ক্ষণে ক্ষণে বারংবার উপলব্ধি করতে হবে। খুব কোলাহলের ভিতরে থেকে একবার চকিতের মতো দেখে নিতে হবে, সেই অন্তরের মধ্যে কে নো কোলাহল পৌঁছচ্ছে না। সেখানে শান্ত স্তব্ধ নিম্নলি। না, কোনো-মতেই সেখানে বাহিরের কোনো চাকলাকে প্রবেশ করতে দেব না।..

“এমন করে সমস্ত কর্ম থেকে, সংসার থেকে, সমস্ত ক্ষোভ থেকে বিবিজ্ঞ করে আত্মকে যখন বিন্যস্ত স্বরূপ জ্ঞান তখন দেখতে পাই তা শূণ্য নয়, তখন নিজের অন্তরে সেই নিম্নলি নিস্তব্ধ পরম বোমকে সেই চিদাকাশকে দেখি যেখানে, সত্য জ্ঞাননন্যং বা নিহিতং গুহ্যম।” নিজের মধ্যে সেই আশ্চর্য জ্যোতির্ময় পরম কোষকে জানতে পারি যেখানে সেই অতি গুহ্য জ্যোতির জ্যোতি বিরাটমান।”....(শান্তিনিকেতন, ১ম খণ্ড, পৃষ্ঠা. ১৮২-৮৩)

অন্তরে-বাহিরে শুচিসুন্দর হওয়ার সাধনা প্রথম অবশ্যক, ব্যক্তিগত একাকিত্বের সাধনাই বটে; তাই বলেন ‘তা শূন্যগতি Escapism নয়, তা জীবনের মুক্তি, হৃদয়ের ত্রাস্তি: স্বদেশমঙ্গল, বিশ্বমঙ্গল তা’ দেবদানপতি। ব্যক্তিসাধনায় অন্তরে বাহিরে যারা ব্রাহ্মানব, তাঁদের সাধনাই, ‘রাত্রির তপস্যাই’—রবিকরোজ্জ্বল গুহ্য ‘দিন’ করে আনয়ন, সংসারকে ‘এগনিমালিনির’ লজ্জা থেকে ‘রাসানালিনির’ প্রজ্ঞাপথে যায় নিয়ে—ভেতর থেকে মানুষকে দীক্ষিত করে প্রেমসাধনায় আদর্শমস্ত্রে। সংসারে সত্যকার বড় মানুষ যারা, যারা বা মানব, তাঁরাই মনুষ্য হের আশা, দেবত্বের আশ্বাস, হৃদয়ের সাধনা, জীবনের শান্তি। তাঁদের দিকে চেয়ে, তাঁদের কথা ভেবে, তাঁদের মস্ত অনুরাগ করে কলকোলাহলপূর্ণ নিত্যবিস্ময় এই কারাক্ষেত্র থেকে আকাশ-দেখার প্রশান্তি কি অনুভব করি নে?

“যে-সমাজে কর্ম আছে, সেই সমাজেই কর্মকে সংযত রাখিবার বিধান থাকা চাই—অর্থ কর্মই বাহ্যতে মনুষ্যত্বের উপর কর্তৃত্ব লাভ না করে এমন সত্যক পাহারা থাকা চাই। কর্মিদলকে বরাবর ঠিক পথটি দেখাইবার জন্য কর্মকোহলাহলের মধ্যে বিশুদ্ধ সুরটি বরাবর অবিচলিতভাবে ধরিয়া রাখিবার জন্য এমন এক দলের আবশ্যক, যাঁহারা যথাসম্ভব কর্ম ও স্বার্থ হইতে নিজেকে মুক্ত রাখিবেন। তাহালাই ব্রাহ্মণ।

এই ব্রাহ্মণেরাই যথার্থ স্বাধীন। ইহালাই স্বাধীনতার

আদর্শকে নিষ্ঠার সহিত, কাঠিণের সহিত সমাজে রক্ষা করেন। সমাজ ইহাদিগকে সেই অবসর সেই সামর্থ্য, সেই সম্মান দেয়। ইহাদের এই মুক্তি, ইহা সমাজেরই মুক্তি।” (স্বদেশ: ব্রাহ্মণ, পৃ: ৯২)

কিন্তু বৈশ্যপ্রধান সমাজে সকলেই যখন বিধবকর্ম নিয়ে ব্যস্ত, এবং বিধবকর্ম ও কর্ম-ব্যস্ততাই যখন সর্বজন ও সর্বজাতি সমর্থিত, তখন কর্মের উর্ধ্বে মনস্বী-রক্ষার তত্ত্ব-সাধনা তেমন প্রেরণাপ্রদ বলে মনেই যেন হয় না। ফলে সমাজ তখন মনুষ্যত্বের উর্ধ্বে মনুষ্যকে স্থান দেয়, চলে বলে কোশলে আত্ম-প্রতিষ্ঠা ও দলপ্রতিষ্ঠার জয় পায়, চিত্তবৃত্তি তখন নিত্যনতই নিম্নাভিমুখী হয় বলে ছোট কাছ, ছীনাচরণ, শোষণ-তোষণ প্রভৃতি পাশবিককারে লজ্জা পায় না, বরং সমর্থন করে ব্যস্ত বলে। বৈশ্যপ্রধান সমাজে যজ্ঞোপবীতধারী তথাকথিত জন্ম ব্রাহ্মণেরাও বীতধারী বৈশ্যচরণে তৎপর হয়, যুক্তি দেয় যে, না হয়ে যেন পারাই যায় না। সমাজকে শ্রেয়োবোধে তারা উন্নীত করে না; চিত্তো-ন্মেষের সহস্র কর্মে বিশ্বাস হারিয়ে তারা আধ্যাত্মিক নেতৃত্ব হারায়, সামাজিক দায়বরণে শূদ্রাচরণকেই জীবনচর্চা মনে করে। দেবদ্ব্যাকনায় যে ব্রাহ্মণ নয়। যে নামেই ব্রাহ্মণ, কাজে নয়, ভাবে নয়।

“যে-ব্রাহ্মণ সাহেবের আপিসে নত মস্তকে চাকরি করে যে-প্রাণ আপনায় অবকাশ বিক্রয় করে, আপনায় নহান অধিকারকে বিসর্জন দেয়, যে-ব্রাহ্মণ বিদ্যালয়ে বিদ্যাবধিক, বিচারালয়ে বিচার-ব্যবসায়ী, যে-ব্রাহ্মণ পয়সার পরিবর্তে আপনায় ব্রাহ্মণ্যকে বিকৃত করিয়াছে, সে আপন আদর্শ রক্ষা করিবে কী করিয়া, সমাজ রক্ষা করিবে কী করিয়া শ্রদ্ধার সহিত তাহার নিকট ধর্মের বিধান লইতে যাইব কী বলিয়া? সে তো সর্ব-সাধারণের সহিত সমান ভাবে মিশিয়া ধর্মাজ্ঞ কলেবরে আড়া-কাড়ি ঠেলাঠেলির কাজে ভিড়িয়া গেছে। ভক্তির দ্বারা সে ব্রাহ্মণ তো সমাজকে উদ্ধে আকৃষ্ট করে না—নিম্নেই লইয়া যায়।” (স্বদেশ: ব্রাহ্মণ পৃ ৯৩)

কবিগুরু ‘কথা কাবোর’ কবিতাবলীও সমরধীয়া। তাগ, সেবা, তিতিক্ষা, নিরোভিতা প্রভৃতি দেবগুণের ব্রাহ্মণ্য গুণকেই ‘কথা’র গিররূপ দেয়া হয়েছে। (সমরধীয়া: প্রতিনিধি, পূজারিণী, অভিযার প্রভৃতি) কবিগুরুর সর্বাধুনিক গদ্যকাব্যেও ব্রাহ্মণচরিত্রের বিদ্যাবিলাস লক্ষ্য করেছি। ‘পুনশ্চ’ কাবোর ‘তৃষ্টি’, ‘মুক্তি’, ‘স্মানসমাপন’ প্রথম পূজা ‘শিশুতীর্থ’—এ-প্রসঙ্গে চিত্তিতব্য। সন্ধান করলে রবীন্দ্রনাথের নান্যক, উপন্যাসে ও গল্পগুচ্ছের বহু গল্পে দ্বিবাচরিত্র ব্রাহ্মণানবের আদর্শ পাওয়া যাবে।

এই আদর্শের শিশুশ্রুতিগুলি বিশ্বজাতি আজ বন্ধি-বুঝি করছে, ধরি-ধরি করছেন। ইউরোপ-আমেরিকার জাতি সমূহ যে-কোনো কারণেই হউক রবীন্দ্রাদর্শের মর্বাদ স্বীকার করছেন। ...সমাজতাত্ত্বিক বস্তুবাদী রাশিয়াও রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যে ও দর্শনে শ্রদ্ধার ভাব পোষণ করছেন। যতদূর মনে হয় এক সাম্যবাদী চীন ছাড়া রবীন্দ্রমহত্ত্ব ও তত্ত্ব সকল দেশ ও জাতিই শ্রদ্ধাশীল হয়ে উঠেছেন। মহাচীনের জীবনাদর্শ আজ জিগীষু ধর্মের সমর্থনে চালিত হলেও একদা তার চিত্ত ও চরিত্রের পরিবর্তন ঘটবে। চীনেরো নবজন্ম হবে।

চাঁদের অনুসরণে অনেককেই আমরা রবীন্দ্রের বৃক্ষতরকে একদা বুড়োয়া 'তরু বনে' বাগ্ম্য করতে গেছি। ঈশ্বরকে বন্যবাদ, জাতি-সে-ব্যাক্য গ্রহণ করে নি। 'আজ আমরা অনেককেই রবীন্দ্রভাব ও ভাবনাকে অস্তরঙ্গভাবে বুঝতে চেষ্টা করছি।.... কিছু না পারি এটুকু অস্তরঃ বুঝতে পারছি যে, পুণ্ডিত বিদ্যা নী পাণ্ডিত্য নয়, সেক্ষেত্রে গোড়ামি বা একেলে নাতন্দবির নয়, বৃক্ষাদর্শের বাস্তব উপলব্ধি ও আচরণই রবীন্দ্রভাবন, দর্শন, ও কাব্যাদ্যদের অধিতীয় মহায়ত।

বর্তমান শতাব্দীতে কবিগুরু আমাদের শিশুসৌন্দর্যে ঠান দিয়েছেন—আরো কয়েক শতবর্ষ পরে ভাবনের গভীর থেকে ঠান দেবেনঃ তখন আমরা ভেতর থেকে ধর হয়ে উঠব, নবজন্ম লাভে, দ্বিচ্ছা হন, হন লাঞ্ছন—অস্তরঃভাবনের দিব্যউজ্জল্যে ব্যক্তিভাবন, সমাজভাবন, রাষ্ট্রভাবন তথা বিশ্বভাবনকে করন অভিস্রবতে। রবীন্দ্রভাবনার ভাবতরঙ্গের, অথও এমিয়ার এবং বিশ্বপুণ্ডিত্যের এই আশ্রয়, এই স্বপ্ন ও সাক্ষরঃ

বিশ্বব্যাপী নামধীন আনন্দ
দিক আমাকে নিরক্ষর মূর্তি।
সেই এককারকে সাধনা করি
যার মধ্যে শুধু বসে আছেন
বিশুচিত্রের রূপকার,
যিনি নামের অতীত,
প্রকাশিত যিনি আনন্দে।

(শেষ সপ্তক)

বর্তমানবৃণে কবির এই উজ্জ্বল অনেকের কাছেই হয়তো সেক্ষেত্রে এবং অব্যাহত বলে মনে হবে।....গণতান্ত্রিক রাষ্ট্রে সকলের সমান অধিকার অর্থাৎ প্রাক্ষণ-ক্ষত্রিয়-শৈব্য-শূদ্র সকলেই সমভাবে কাষে কাষ মিলিয়ে কাজ করবে—এই তো আদর্শ।.... আমার সাম্যবাদী বড়দের আদর্শের তো সমকেই সমান—উচ্চনীচ ভেদাভেদচিহ্ন তো প্রতিজ্ঞাশীল বুড়োয়া চিহ্ন ছাড়া আর কিছু না।

শিক। কিন্তু ভেদাভেদচিহ্ন মশ করেও কি বলা যায় না, যে, দলের মধ্যে যিনি নেতা—বিদ্যা, বুদ্ধি, ত্যাগ ও কর্মসাধনার সাধারণ থেকে তিনি অনেক বড় শূ....আর একথাও কি সত্য নয়, যে, নেতা যদি যথোচ্চাচারী হন, একচ্ছত্রনায়ক হন, তবে জন-সাধারণ তাঁকে ভয়ে বড় ভাবে, কিন্তু জীবনাদর্শের মহৎওণে জনসমন্থানে সর্বসম্মতভাবে যদি নেতৃত্ব পান—তবে ভক্তি-ঈচ্ছায় তিনি লোক চক্ষে বড় হয়ে উঠেন? ভয়ের বাঁধন লোকে ছিন্ন করতেই চায়, কাজে যদি না পারে, মনে মনে চায়। ভক্তির বাঁধন লোকে তো ছিন্ন করেই না—বরং বাঁধনের মহিমাতেই চিত্তমুক্তির পায় প্রেরণা।

গণতান্ত্রিক সমন্যধিকার বা সাম্যবাদী অভেদম্ব মেনে নিয়েও বলা যায়, সমাজে যেমন নেতা আছে, আছে তাঁর অনুসারকবর্গ, সংসারে তেমনি পৈশিক আছে, আছে তাঁর প্রেমোপাসক। লক্ষ্য করলেই দেখবেন—সত্যকার যিনি নেতা, সর্বজনবরণ্য নেতা, তিনি নিজের ব্যক্তি হৃৎকের জন্য যত কম চান, সর্বসাধারণের সঙ্গে যত সমান হতে চান, ততই তাঁর ব্যক্তিহ্ব বাড়ে, কথার মূল্য বাড়ে,

অনুসারকের সংখ্যা বাড়ে। সকলের জন্যে যিনি, সকলের তিনি শঙ্কর পাত্র, সকলের সমসারে উপবেশন করেও অব্যাবৃত্ত উচ্চাসনে তিনি সমারীন। নেতাকে তাই ব্যক্তিহ্বার্থ বলি দিতে হয় বিশ্বস্বার্থঃ ব্যক্তি-ইচ্ছাকে বিশ্ব-ইচ্ছায় যিনি সমর্পণ-করার মহামন পেয়েছেন—তিনিই নেতা।

বিদ্যা, বুদ্ধি, শক্তি, প্রতিভা, ত্যাগ ও প্রেমের যেমন তারতম্য আছে, শক্তিদি ওপানুসারে নোদের মধ্যেও তেমনি ছোট-বড় ভেদ আছে। সত্য কার বড় যিনি, ছোটদের তিনি ছোট না ভাবতে পারেন (না ভাবে পারাতেই তাঁর মহত্ব ও নেতৃত্ব) কিছু ছোটরা জানে, ভয়ে কিংবা ভক্তিতে জানে, তাঁরে ওপর বড় আছে, বড়-র বড়-ও হয়তো আছে।....

নেতার লক্ষ্য যদি গোড়ি গতি, সম্প্রদায়গতি, তবে বিশেষ কোনো গোড়ি বা সম্প্রদায়ের কল্যাণেই তাঁর কর্ম, তাঁর ত্যাগ ত্রিতিক্ষা সংগ্রাম বা সাধনা। কিছু নেতা যদি বিশ্বজনীন কোনো উচ্চাঙ্গেরে বিশ্বাগী হন, দীক্ষিত হন, তবে, বলাই বাহুল্য, সেই আদর্শ-জালনেই তাঁর প্রাণপণ সাধনা।

এই সাধনা যত সত্য, অস্তরে বাহিরে তিনি ততই সত্য। সত্যানুসরণই তাঁকে ব্যক্তিহ্বায়না থেকে বিশ্বসাধনার তথা বিশ্ব-মঙ্গলে উদ্দীপ্ত করে। বিশ্বের সকলকে স্বীকার করেই তাঁর ব্যক্তিবিকাশ, কারোকে উপেক্ষা করে নিষ্কিত করে বা শোষণ করে নয়। সকলের গুরুকল্প ভক্তিতাজন হয়েও তিনিসাধনের মত অতিসাধারণ দায়-দায়িত্ব কক্ষে নেন—নেতা বলে বা গুরু বলে স্বতন্ত্র কোনো ভোগালস্যের জ্বালাপরিলাস তিনি চান না।

এমনতর নেতা রাজনৈতিক গণতন্ত্রে বা সাম্যতন্ত্রে আছেন কি না জানি না, কিন্তু বৃক্ষতন্ত্রে আছেন। সাম্প্রতিক কর্মভারাক্রান্ত বিক্ষুব্ধ বৃণেও বৃক্ষতন্ত্রে বিশ্বাগী মানুষ জানে—ব্যক্তিগতভাবে, সমাজগতভাবে রাষ্ট্রাধিকারক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই তিনি সকলের সমান, সকলের কাঁধে কাঁধ মিলিয়েই চলতে চান, কিন্তু একাটি জায়গায় তিনি স্বতন্ত্রঃ প্রেমের সাধনার তিনি হতে চান অনন্যচরিত্র, ত্যাগের মহিমায়, অনুপম মানুষ।

কবিগুরু বিশ্বাসঃ ধরিত্রী এই যত অনুপম মানুষেরই প্রতীক্ষা করছে। যারা কুক, যারা লুক, মাংসগন্ধে যারা মুক, আল্লার মহত্বসৌন্দর্যে বিশ্বাগ নেই যাদের, মানুষ হয়েও জন্তুর মত বাঁধুংস চাঁৎকারে যারা বাজী মাং করে বা করছে—সাম্প্রতিক বৃণে জনসমাজে তাদের প্রভাব বৃদ্ধি পেলেও, নীরবাসনে নিস্তব্ধ ধরিত্রী "ত্যাগীরে প্রত্যাশা করি" আছে সমারীনাঃ

ইচ্ছের ঐশ্বর্য নিয়ে, যে ধরিত্রী, আচ্ছ তুমি জাগি
ত্যাগীর প্রত্যাশা করি নিলোভেরে সর্পিতে সংধান,
দুর্গমের পথিকেরে আতিথ্য করিতে তব দান
বৈরাগ্যের শুভ সিংহাসনে।

(শৈল্পিতঃ জন্মদিন)

অবশ্য অর্থনৈতিক নিতা অভাব ও অব্যবহার যুগে ত্যাগের বৃহৎ ধর্ম কিনা বৃক্ষাদর্শ, চরিত্রে প্রতিভাত করা সহজ ব্যাপার নয়। পেটের দায়ে কর্ম-করার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বৃক্ষধর্ম পালন-করা খুবই কঠিন যে, সে-বিষয়ে কোনো সন্দেহ-ই নেই। কিন্তু একথা যদি সত্য হয়, যে কঠিনকে সরল করে আনার শক্তি-স্বভাব মানুষের

মধ্যেই আছে—এবং আকিমে বলে, কারখানায়, ইষ্টুলে, কলেজে, কোটে এমন মানুষেরা দর্শন মেনে যাঁরা অল্পের জন্য বহুকে হনন করেন না, তুচ্ছ মোহাসক্ত হয়ে মনুষ্যদের উচ্চবর্গকে দেন না জলাঞ্জলি।....আমাদের ইষ্টুলকলেজে, কলেকারখানায় সাধা-মতো যাঁরা সত্য বলে, সত্য করে, জাতীয় বোধে করে কর্ম, বিশ্ববোধে দেয় মন, কীকি জানে না, জ্ঞানতঃ করে না অনাগর, লোভ করে না অসদ্ব্যবহারে, কোভ করে না অকারণে—সাম্প্রতিক ভাষায় আমরা তাঁদের ‘নির্বোধ’ বলে’ কি ‘মামু’ বলে কৌতুক করতে পারি—কিন্তু মনে মনে তাঁদের এছাড়া না করেও তো পারি না।....সীমিত জীবনের সংকীর্ণ পটীর মধ্যে থেকেও, ইচ্ছা থাকলে, বড় আদর্শ জানা যায়, মানা যায়। বৃহত্তম শ্রেয় সম্বন্ধে পারনা মেই বলে তুচ্ছকেই আমরা শ্রেয় মনে করি। তুচ্ছ কেঁদিত হয়ে মনটা তুচ্ছ-ই হয়, সংকীর্ণই হয়। বড় আদর্শ জীবনের ব্যাপার, কিন্তু সংকীর্ণ মনের কাছে বড় আদর্শ জীবন-বহির্ভূত অব্যবহৃত তত্ত্বকথা বলেই প্রতীকমান হয়।

বড় আদর্শকে গ্রহণ করতে এবং চরিত্রে কুলিতে তুলতে যে মনঃশক্তি এ অব্যবহৃত শক্তির প্রয়োজন—সংসার বা সমাজের কর্ম তার যত্নস্বরূপ। কর্ম করেও আমি অবকাশ পেতে পারি, কর্ম করার অবকাশ, যদি কর্মের উর্ধ্ব স্থাপন করি আমার জীবনকে।....পেন্সির দ্বারা আপনি কলকারখানায় যাচ্ছেন কি হাটে-বাজারে বসছেন, ডাক্তারি করছেন কি উকীলী করছেন কি নাগরিক করছেন বা কেরাণীগিরি করছেন—কিছু মানুষ হিসাবে যদি সত্য থাকেন, ন্যায়সঙ্গত কর্ম করায় বা করানোয় থাকেন তৎপর, অস্তরে বাহিরে প্রাণনা করেন নিজের কল্যাণের সঙ্গে সকলের কল্যাণ—তবে পৌনঃপুন্য জীবনবাদের সংকীর্ণতা সাম্প্রতিক যুগকে প্রভাবিত করলেও মানবিক আপনাকে করবে না।....

পেন্সির স্ব জীবনবাদের প্রভাবে কী আমরা দেশকে বা সমাজকে দিচ্ছি তা দেখি নে, কী পাচ্ছি বা পাচ্ছি না, সেইটেই বড় করে দেখি।....দেয়ার ইচ্ছায় নয়, দাবীর বাসনায় মত্ত হয়ে সমাজেরি শুধু নয়, নিঃসঙ্গ মনোবৃত্তি করি—কিন্তু করি যে, তা বুঝাও বুঝি না যে-মনকে বিশ্বমন্ডলে দক্ষিণ করা সম্ভব, সেই মনকে ব্যক্তিগত বা দলবাদের করি প্রস্তুত।

অসংখ্য, ঈর্ষা, চুলনা, কীকি, আত্মসংকীর্ণতা বা গোষ্ঠি-পোষণ, নোয়াছেবী কি শোষণ কৌশল—বৈষয়িক জীবনে অবশ্যই বাস্তব। বৈশ্যাদর্শে এগুলি খুবই কার্যকরী। সংসারে আজ বৈশ্যরাই সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ বলে—বীভৎস মস্ত্রে বৈশ্যমস্ত্রই উদ্বীথ হচ্ছে, সমর্থিত হচ্ছে।....কিন্তু অভাবে বৈশ্যকর্ম নিয়েও যাঁরা স্বভাব প্রাধান্য—কর্মকারাগারে বদ্ধ হয়েও শ্রেয় সাধনায় তাঁরা মোহমুক্ত। চাকরী করেও তাঁরা আপনকার মানস-মহিমার ‘মহান অধিকারকে’ বিসর্জন দেন না, অর্থাৎ সংভাবে তাঁরা কর্ম করেন, সংভাবে উপার্জন করেন অর্থ, যা করেন তাতে তাঁর সংসারের অভাব না ঘুটলেও অর্থের কারণে নোয়াছেবী করেন না কালোর কিংবা বলেন না : যা পাই তাতে কম কাজ করাই মঙ্গত, অর্থাৎ কাজে কীকি দেয়াচিন্তাই চাতুর্যের তৃপ্তি, সেইহতে বাস্তব আদর্শ।

এই যত স্বভাব-প্রাধান্যই সমাজের আদর্শ। “দুর্ভাব, উন্নতভাবে অলুচ্ছভাবে ‘জীবনের’ পরমধনটি রক্ষা” করে চলেন বলে’ সমাজ বৈশ্যজীবন হয়ও আজও তাঁদের মানা

করে, ভক্তি করে। জীবন দিয়ে তাঁরাই প্রমাণ করেন—জন্ম-প্রাধান্য নয়, স্বভাবপ্রাধান্য-ই প্রাধান্য।....বৃদ্ধ বর্ষ না-বরেই প্রাধান্যের যিনি অহংকার করেন, তিনি মামু তিনি মদাচীন। প্রাধান্যের অহংকার নয়, বৃদ্ধকর্মে ও বর্ষে দীক্ষা এবং তদনুসারে সাধ্যমত আচরণই প্রাধান্যকে প্রাধান্য, এমনকি শূদ্রকে-ও, প্রাধান্য করে।....মানুষের সমাজে যদি বৃদ্ধাদর্শ থাকে, প্রাধান্য থাকেন, “আদর্শ সজীব থাকে, বর্ষপাভেজনের চেষ্টা থাকে, হেক আশে যাক কেহ পিচ্ছাইয়া পড়ুক, কিন্তু পথের পথিক যদি থাকে, যদি এই আদর্শের প্রত্যক্ষ দৃষ্টান্ত অনেকের মধ্যে দেখতে পাওয়া যায়, তবে সেই চেষ্টার দ্বারা সেই সাধনার দ্বারা সেই সকলভাপ্রাপ্ত ব্যক্তিদের দ্বারা ই সমস্ত সম্প্রদায় সার্থক হইয়া থাকে।” (স্বদেশ : প্রাধান্য, পৃঃ ৯৪)

রবীন্দ্রনাথের জীবনসাধনা তথা কাব্যসাধনার মূলে এই বৃদ্ধ বাদ, এই প্রাধান্যই মনুষ্যদের মহিমা প্রকাশের এই আনন্দতত্ত্ব।....শূদ্রমনকে তিনি প্রাধান্যায়িত করে চান খেদের আনন্দে।....দহং নয়, ব্যক্তিগত নয়, আল্লার পথে বৃহত্তর ভূমির চেতনায় তাঁর চিহ্নাভিযার। বর্তমান যুগে রবীন্দ্রপ্রতি দেখে কি অনুমান করব—রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই বৃদ্ধাদর্শ সাম্প্রতিক সমাজকে স্পর্শ করেছে?....রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্য, জীবন ও কাব্যপাঠে বর্তমান পৃথিবী যখন আনন্দ প্রকাশ করেছে, তখন বরে কি নেব যে, যতগুণ গোপন জীবনে মানুষের রসবোধ, দেববোধ কি না বৃদ্ধবোধ বিস্তৃত হয়ে যায় নি, কল্পনার মত এখনো প্রবর্তমান?....বৈষয়িকতার চাপে পড়ে মানুষ আজ বহিঃবিষয়ক ব্যাপারগুলির বন্ধনেই আছে বদ্ধ, কিন্তু অবসরের কোনো স্তম্ভ মুহুর্তে রবীন্দ্রপাঠ করামাত্র আছও তাহলে সে বৃত্তিতে পৌঁছে—অন্তর্জীবনে সে আর এক নূতন মানুষ—যেখানে সে ‘বুদ্ধ’ হতে চায় ‘সবার সঙ্গে’, জীবন থেকে জীবনে তার গতিগতি, আনিবচনায়ের আকর্ষণে তার আনন্দ, মানববুদ্ধি তার প্রেম, বুদ্ধানন্দে তার শিরমুক্তি?

মানুষের এই প্রাক্তন মনুষ্যবোধ, এই দেবধর্মহিমার আনন্দ বোধ শিরকোশলে কবি মনোময় সৌন্দর্যে প্রকাশ করেছেন। তিনি যা বলেন, যেমন করে বলেন—বড় সমাদরেই আমরা তা গ্রহণ করি, আদর্শও করি—কিন্তু জীবনের তা ধরে রাখতে পারি না। হয়ে উঠি না, তাই দ্বিধা হওয়ার, নব চেতনায় নূতন জন্ম লাভ করার, সোভাগ্য হয় না প্রমুদিত।

হয়ে না-উঠলে রবীন্দ্রসাধনার মর্মসার্থী সমাল উপলব্ধি করা সম্ভব না।....মনে রাখা ভালো কবিগুরু জীবনতত্ত্ব হয়ে-ওঠার তত্ত্ব, প্রচলিত কোনো দর্শন ব্যার বা দর্শনসাধার প্রবর্তিত তত্ত্ব নয়। কবির বাবক কালের রচনা রকবিকাহিনীতেই এই হয়ে-ওঠার ব্যাকুলগাতি লক্ষ্য করার মত। কামমোহ থেকে প্রেমবৈরাগ্যে, তত্ত্বের ভাষায় বৃদ্ধভাবে, উত্তীর্ণ হওয়ার আকর্ষণ ভাবটি পণিবানযোগ্য। ‘মানসী’ কালো এসে কবি জীবনগতি দেবদেতার নির্দেশ স্পষ্টত পেয়েছেন বলে মনে হয় (সমরপার ‘নিষ্ফল কামনা’, হরদাসের প্রাণনা’, অহংকার প্রতি প্রভৃতি)

গোনার তরী-কাব্য থেকে দেখে লেখা পথত খেদের দুর্গম পথে নিরুদ্ধদেখ যাত্রা। এ-যাত্রা, বলাই বাজলা, আমি-জীবন থেকে আমি-জীবনেই যাত্রা : যে-আমি আজ আছি সেই আমি থেকে অর্থাৎ জীব-আমি থেকে, শিব-আমিতে যাত্রা।



রবীন্দ্ৰকবীর ছবি

জোসেফ সাউথ্‌ হল

ঠাকুরের ছবি আমাদের বাধা করে কিছুকণ থমকে দাঁড়াতে, নিজেদের চেতনার কাছে নতুন করে চিত্রাঙ্কণের প্রশ্ন উত্থাপন করতে : রং আর তুলি ব্যবহারের, কিম্বা যে-কোন শিল্পকর্মেরই উদ্দেশ্য কি ? একি আমাদের অর্থিক মনোরঞ্জন অথবা সাময়িক স্মৃতিস্মরণবিধানের এক মজার খেলনা ? নাকি চেতনার অনুভূতি-গুলিকে এক আত্মার গভীর থেকে আরেক আত্মার গভীরে নিয়ে যাওয়ার দুর্ভাগ্য ?

যেসব শিল্পী দর্শকসাধারণকে সহজেই আকর্ষণ করতে সমর্থ, মিডিয় প্রচুর ছাত্তালি-পাওয়া বস্তুর মতো তাঁরা সকল সময়েই সত্যক থাকেন, যেন তাঁদের শিল্পকর্ম সাধারণ দর্শকের প্রচলিত ধ্যান-ধারণাকে কোনদিক থেকে আঘাত না করে। যে ধরণের শিল্প দর্শকদের কাছে কঠিন মানসিক এবং আর্থিক প্রস্তুতির দাবী জানায়, জনপ্রিয় শিল্পীরা সচরাচর তার ছাওয়া থেকে তফাৎ থাকেন। কিছু সত্যিকারের কবি অথবা চিত্রী আমাদের দৃষ্টি সেখানেই আকর্ষণ করেন যেখানেকার কোন দৃশ্য কোনদিন আমাদের দেখা হয়নি।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ছবিগুলি আরো প্রমাণ করলো, কবি যদিও কথার ব্যবহারে স্নাতকের মতোই শক্তিশালী, তথাপি তিনি অনুভব করেন,—অদয়ের কোন কোন ভাবনা কবিতার নয়, শুধু ছবিতেই প্রকাশ করা সম্ভব। ছবির রং, ছবির ভাষা আর ছবির রেখা তাই এক মহৎ কবিকে আরো দূরে, চেতনার আরেক রাজ্যে আকর্ষণ করে।

চিত্রাঙ্কণের সার্বিক ব্যবহার শারীরবিদ্যার সূক্ষ্মাতিসূক্ষ্ম জ্ঞান কিম্বা পরিবেশিকতার চুলচেরা বিচারের মতো বহির্জগতের বিশেষ ভাবনাগুলির আশ্রয়ী নয়। শিল্পীর তুলিতে রেখা আর রং যে-ভাষায় মনের কথা বলে, তা কোনো ছবি আঁকার স্কুলে শেখানো অসম্ভব। বরং বহিরব্দের প্রতি মাত্রাতিরিক্ত আকর্ষণ প্রায়ই শিল্পীর স্বপ্ন ও স্বকীয়তাকে আঘাত করে, সৃষ্টির পুরুষকারে অনাস্থা জানায়। ঠাকুরের আঁকা ছবিগুলিতে আমি যা দেখতে পাই তা হ'লো শিল্পীর ধ্যানস্থ মনের প্রকাশ-ব্যাকুলতা। রেখা

আর রংয়ের চন্দ-ভ্রমায় তিনি এমন করে রূপদৃশ্যাবলী অবলোকন করে থাকেন, পারস্পরিক গালিচায় কিম্বা চাকচিক্যমূলিনে আমরা যে-ধরণের শিল্পকর্ম ও কৃষ্টির ব্যবহার দেখতে পাই। অনেকটা তেমনি সহজ চন্দ্রের গভীর খণ্ডা লেগেছে ঠাকুরের ছবিগুলিতে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের রং-নিবাচনের বাহাদুরি সত্যি তুলনাহীন ; যেমতান গভীর থেকে এইসব রং আপন চোখেই কানভাসের উপর নিজেদের প্রতিভািত করেচে, এমনি স্বাভাবিক তাদের ব্যবহার।

কিন্তু এখানেই সবকথা ফুরায় না ; রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছবিতে আরো আছে। চেতনার গভীরে যেসব ভাবনা কথা বলে, খেলা করে, তারই প্রাণ পেয়েছে ঠাকুরের ছবিতে। এ-ছাড়া প্রকৃতি, মানুষ এবং এমনকি পশুও সত্তার নিভুতে যে অন্তরাগ্নি সঞ্চারী—রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছবি তাকেই বাহে বাহে প্রকাশ করতে চেয়েছে। তাদের মুখ, চোখ এবং চলার ভঙ্গিতে শিল্পীর ব্যবহৃত রং আর রেখা যে অনবদ্য ভাবজগতের সৃষ্টি করেছে তা প্রাণী-মানুষের আবার্থিক স্তরেতনাই দর্শকদের সামনে উপস্থিত করতে সমর্থ।

শিল্পী রবীন্দ্রনাথের এইসব অভিব্যক্তি কি কথায় বোঝানো সম্ভব, নাকি কেউ মুখ ফুটে বলে দিতে পারেন,—ঠাকুর এই ছবিতে এই কথাই বলতে চান অথবা এই ছবিতে তাঁর বক্তব্য মোটামুটি এই.....? আমার দৃষ্টি-ধারণা, ঠাকুরের ছবির এইসব ব্যাখ্যা অচল, কেননা কথা দিয়েই যদি ছবির সকল বলা ফুরিয়ে দেওয়া যেতো, তাহ'লে এ-কাজতো কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথেরই সাধায়াত্ব ছিলো সবচেয়ে বেশী। আর কবি যদি ছবির সকল ভাবনাই গুড়িয়ে লিখতে পারতেন, তাহ'লে কেন তিনি আঁকতে চাইলেন, কেন রেখার ওপর রংয়ের আলনা রচনা করলেন ?

আমরা তাই ঠাকুরের আঁকা ছবির মানন নীরবে এসে দাঁড়াই, ছবি দেখি, আর সত্তার ভেতরে তলাই, তলাতেই থাকি ; আর যদি সত্যি বলার স্বরিতা আমাদের ছেড়ে না যায়, তাহলে এ-সব ছবি সম্পর্কে শুধু এইটুকুই ব্যাখ্যা দেওয়া চলে যে, আমাদের এই গভীরে যাওয়াটিই রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছবি দেখা, কেন না এ-চলার শেষ নেই, প্রত্যাবর্তন নেই।



Last Journey from Santiniketan
to Calcutta in a Special Train
on July - 25 1941

শান্তিনিকেতন হইতে শেষ বিদায়
(কলিকাতার পথে ২৫শে জুলাই ১৯৪১)



Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
and Dr. Tan Yun Shan
with the Poet

শান্তিনিকেতনে জৱাহরলাল
ও তান য়ুন শেন সহ

রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার বৈশিষ্ট্য

মূলক রাজ আনন্দ



গত দেড়শ বছরের ভারতীয় মানস-ইতিহাসকে কোন সাধারণ লক্ষণ চিহ্নিত করতে গেলে বলা যায়, দীর্ঘ মৈরাশ্য ও অশান্তির যুগ। পাশ্চাত্য যজ্ঞ-সভ্যতার আঘাতে আমাদের স্বল্পপরিমিত, শূন্যগতি গ্রামীণ জীবন ভেঙ্গে পড়েছে, রেলপথ ও যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থার উন্নতি কাদানান্নির কুণ্ডলকে শান-বাঁধানো শহরের সঙ্গে যুক্ত করেছে, বাইরের মেলামেলিতে আমাদের শহরগুলি বৃহত্তর পৃথিবীর সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠ হয়ে উঠেছে। আত্ম-সমাহিত, স্ববির ভারতবর্ষে সে এক অভূতপূর্ব আলোড়নের সূচনা। তার ঘুম-ভাঙ্গার দিন; মরিত রূপান্তরের ক্রান্তিলগ্ন।

এই নবরূপায়ণের হোতা উদ্দেশ্যভারা বিদেশী বলেই পুরানো প্রাণের জঞ্জাল ও আবর্জনা বোঁচিয়ে বিদায় করার কথা ভাবলেন না, রূপান্তরের বন্যায় যে সব স্বংসের স্তূপ ভেঙে যায়নি, তাকে যুগোপর্যোগী করবার কোন চেষ্টাও করলেন না। ফলে, যে নতুন সভ্যতার সৃষ্টি হল তার রূপটা কৃত্রিম, পাঁচামশেলি। একই সভ্যতার প্রবাহে বিভিন্ন ও বিরুদ্ধধর্মী সংস্কৃতির রেশ স্তব্ধ অস্তিত্ব নিয়ে রইল, সব মিলিয়ে নতুন সভ্যতা ও সংস্কৃতির কোন বৈশিষ্ট্য লক্ষণ, কোন বিশেষ প্যামির্প ফুটে উঠলো না।

প্রাচীন আচার-ইতিহাসের চিরাচরিত ধারাকে এই নতুন প্রবাহের অঙ্গীকৃত করার, নতুন কাঠামোর তাকে খাপ খাইয়ে নেবার, চেষ্টা হয়নি এমন নয়; কিন্তু বিদেশী শাসক কোন দিনই এই প্রচেষ্টাকে সন্মুখের দেখেনি। আশ্রয় হবার বাগনাকে তারা প্রথম থেকেই প্রতিহত করেছে। এমন পরিস্থিতিতে ভারতীয় সমাজ-মানসে বিপর্যয় অনিবার্য হয়ে উঠবে, সন্দেহ নেই। হলো ও তাই। সামন্ততান্ত্রিক অতীতের অন্ধ কুসংস্কার, বহুবাবহারে জীর্ণ রীতি-পদ্ধতি ও লোকাচার প্রাণ্ডসর কালের আবেগ ও উদ্দীপনার পাশাপাশি বেঁচে রইল; নতুন জীবন-উৎস থেকে উৎসারিত সংস্কৃতি দেশের সর্বত্র পরিব্যাপ্ত হতে পারলো না।

এই সময় থেকেই ইংরেজের স্বাভাবিকপ্রায় নীতির সূত্রপাত। বৃহত্তর সম্ভাবনাময় জীবনের আশ্বাদ ভারতবর্ষ যখন সবেমাত্র পেতে শুরু করেছে, পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার উদার ও অকুপন ঐশ্বর্যকে যখন সে একান্ত শ্রদ্ধায় অকুণ্ঠিতভাবে আপন করে নিতে যাচ্ছে, সেই মুহূর্তেই রূপ আঘাত এলো। লর্ড ম্যাকলে ভারতবাসীর মুখে ইংরেজী বোল ফোঁটাতে চাইলেন, লর্ড বেন্টিন নতুন শিক্ষাপরিকল্পনা চালু করলেন। এই পরিকল্পনা দুটির একদিকে ছিল প্রাচীন ভারতীয় ইতিহাসকে অবহেলা ও উপহাস করার স্বার্থবুদ্ধি, অন্যদিকে ছিল মেকি ইংরেজী শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে সরকারী স্বার্থবাহক কেরাণী স্পিরিটের আরোজন। বাধা-নিষেধের বেড়া জালে নতুন সঙ্গী জটলো 'বিপজ্জনক চিত্রার' উপর খবরদারীতে। যে-সভ্যতা এসেছিল সর্বমানবের বিজয়যোষণা নিয়ে, কার্যকালে দেখা গেল তা দারোয়ানির বেশি কিছু নয়।

বিদেশী স্বার্থের চিনা-পোড়েনে দেশীয় সমাজ-মানসের এই গোঁজামিল রূপেরই নাম 'উপনিবেশিক সমাজবাদ'। বিকৃতি এর স্বভাব-বর্ম। সমাজের ক্রটি ও গলদ সম্পর্কে যে সাদজ্ঞাপ্রত দৃষ্টি ও চেতনায় নতুন সৃষ্টিমুখী যুগের উদ্বোধন সম্ভব, চিন্তা ও মানস-প্রকরণের যে সজীবতা তার সহায়ক, বলা বাজ্জল, এই পরিবেশে তা স্বভাবতই দুর্বল।

সামাজিক অভিব্যক্তির সঙ্গে সাহিত্যিক অভিব্যক্তির কোন স্তনির্দিষ্ট সমান্তরলতা আছে, একথা বলি না। কোন বিশেষ যুগের সাহিত্য তৎকালীন সমাজ-জীবনের বহিঃরূপ রূপ দ্বারা সম্পূর্ণ নিরস্ত্রিত বা তার ছব্ব প্রতিকৃতি, এমন বলাও আমার উদ্দেশ্য নয়। তাহলে, আধুনিক কালে কোন মহৎ শিল্পপ্রচেষ্টাই সম্ভব হতো না, এরূপের সাহিত্যিকেরা এত সার্থক রচনা সৃষ্টি করতে পারতেন না। সমাজ-জীবনের সঙ্গে শিল্পী-মানসের যোগাযোগ এত সরল রেখায় নয়, তা আরো জটিল, অনেক-সাপিন। শিল্প-বিচারে দ্বন্দ্ববাদের সূত্র ও তাই অনেক সূক্ষ্ম। এর কারণ, সজ্জনধর্মী শিল্পী সমাজ-প্রবাহের চলমানার সঙ্গে বতনি যুক্ত, তার উৎস বা পরিণতি সম্পর্কে ততটা ননোযোগী নন। আর সামাজিক ক্রিয়া-কর্ম মূলত জীবনের বহিঃরূপ-সংশ্লিষ্ট বলে ব্যক্তি-মানসের সঙ্গে তার কোন সরাসরি যোগ থাকে না। তাড়াড়া সাহিত্যের একটা নিজস্ব ধারা বা গতি আছে, যার বেরফল সময় সময় সামাজিক কার্যক্রম থেকে বিচ্যুত হওয়া অসম্ভব নয়। তবে, সামাজিক ক্রিয়া-কর্মের শেষ পরিণতি সমাজ-মানসের রূপান্তরে এবং সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের পুনর্গঠনে, তাই সাংস্কৃতি রূপান্তরের সঙ্গে তার একটা পারস্পরিক সম্পর্ক না থেকেও পারে না।

উদাহরণ স্বরূপ উল্লেখ করা যায়, ফরাসী বিপ্লবের সাফলে ভোল্টেয়ার, ডেডিরিট প্রমুখ অষ্টাদশ শতকীয় চিন্তানায়কদের দান নেহাৎ সামান্য ছিল না। এই সব চিন্তানায়ক যে সমাজ-পরিমণ্ডলে পরিবর্তিত হয়েছেন, পরবর্তীকালে তাঁরা তারই বিরুদ্ধতা করেছেন এবং কাগজে-কলমে রাজা ও চার্চ থেকে শুরু করে কৃষিকা পর্যন্ত সকল প্রচলিত বিধিব্যবস্থা উৎপাতের রায় দিয়েছেন। রূপ-বিপ্লব সম্পর্কেও একথা সমানভাবে প্রযোজ্য। পুশ্কিন থেকে শুরু করে টলস্টয় ও গোর্কী পর্যন্ত রাশিয়ার সকল মহৎ সাহিত্যিক এবং লেনিনের চূড়ান্ত সমালোচনাই রূপ-বিপ্লবের পথ প্রস্তুত করেছে।

এডওয়ার্ড ও জর্জীয় যুগে স্বাধীন ও বাহানিয়েধমুক্ত চিত্তার অভাব, অগ্রগতির স্তনির্দিষ্ট পন্থানির্ণয়ে সংশয় ও দোদুল্যমানতা, প্রাচীন প্রথা ও লোকাচারের অভিসন্ধিপ্রসূত দীর্ঘায়ু, কৃপণের অবরুদ্ধ ভাণ্ডারের মত জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানের অধিকার থেকে বঞ্চনা প্রভৃতি নানা কারণ জাতীয় বুদ্ধিজীবী মহলের উল্লিখিত নৈরাশ্য

ও হতাশার জন্য দরিদ্র। এরই দরুণ আমাদের রেনেশীসের বহু প্রচেষ্টা ব্যর্থ এবং অনেক আয়োজন নিষ্ফল হয়েছে।

যে স্বল্পসংখ্যক মহৎ শিল্পী সম্মুখীন এবং সচেতনভাবে এই যুগসম্মিত নৈরাশ্যের বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম করেছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথকে তাদের অন্যতম বললে যথেষ্ট বলা হয় না, বলা উচিত, এঁদের মধ্যে তিনি একক ও অনন্য। রবীন্দ্রনাথের মানস-ইতিহাস আমলে এই যুগের পকাশ ও পরিণতির ইতিহাস।

ভাবপন্থার প্রশয় দিলে যেমন হোমারের রচনা থেকে তিনি যা কল্পনা করেননি তেমন তম উদ্ধার করা সম্ভব, তেমনি খুঁত খুঁতলে তাঁর রচনা আমার, মীরস বা পুনরাবৃত্তিমূলক অংশ পের করাও দুঃসাধ্য নয়। শোনা যায়, সেক্সপীয়র তাঁর লেখক জীবনে কখনো কোন লাইন ক্যান্ট-ডেড়া করেননি, রদবদলের কথা নাকি ভাবেনই না। অথচ, আজকাল আমি এবং আমার মত আরো কেউ কেউ একি কথা প্রায়ই ভাবিনা যে, ঐতিহাসিক নানিকগুলি থেকে কোন কোন আশ্চর্যজনক অংশ বাদ দিলে সেক্সপীয়র ভালোই করেতেন? রবীন্দ্রনাথ আশি বছর বেঁচে-ছিলেন এবং মৃত্যুকাল পর্যন্ত অশান্তগতিতে লেখনী চালনা করেছেন। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই তাঁর রচনা কখনো কখনো নান্দ্রাতিরঞ্জিত হয়েছে, পরিমিত স্ফুটনের নিয়ম-শাসন মানা হয়তো সব ক্ষেত্রে সম্ভব হয়নি। জহরী মনালোচকেরা তাঁর অপরিমিত রচনার ঐশ্বর্য থেকে ভালো-মন্দে বাড়াই-বিশ্লেষণ করছেন। কিন্তু মনালোচকের দায়িত্বপালন আমার উদ্দেশ্য নয় বলেই আমি শুধু বলব, আজ যে সাংস্কৃতিক পরিমণ্ডলে আমরা নিঃশ্বাস নিই, মন মনন ও হৃদয়বেগের যে উত্তরাধিকার নিয়ে বর্তমান যুগে আমরা দাঁড়ি—এর অনেকখানিই রবীন্দ্রনাথের রচনা। আধুনিক ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির প্রায় সবটুকু এই উৎস থেকেই উৎসারিত।

রবীন্দ্রনাথের কর্মধারা বহুমুখী, তাঁর প্রতিভা সর্বত্রসমগ্রী; কিন্তু তাঁর সকল প্রচেষ্টা ছাপিয়ে যে তিনিই বৈশিষ্ট্য সর্বোচ্চে আমার নজরে পড়ে এবং আমাদের রেনেশীসে আমি যেগুলিকে তাঁর মহত্তম দান বলে মনে করি, বর্তমান প্রবন্ধে আমি তারই দিকে পাঠকদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করব। আমার বিশ্বাস, এই বৈশিষ্ট্যগুলি বর্তমান মুহূর্তেও আমাদের কর্মের পথে অনুপ্রাণিত করতে পারে।

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রেনেশীস-আন্দোলনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের মহত্তম দানঃ আমাদের আত্ম-সচেতন, রেনেশীস-সচেতন করে তোলা। সমগ্র জাতি হিসাবে আমরা যে নতুন করে আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে যাচ্ছি, সমৃদ্ধতর মানবসম্মুখের বৃহত্তর পটভূমিকায়, জীবনের দিগন্তবিসারী আয়োজনে আমরা যে দেশ ও জাতিকে এবং সেই সঙ্গে নিজেদেরকে প্রতিমুহূর্তে নতুন করে রচনা করে চলছি, সেইদিকে রবীন্দ্রনাথই আমাদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেন প্রথম। আবহমানকালের ভারতবর্ষ যে তাগরণ-চাপকলো আলোড়িত, এবং সেই আলোড়নের মধ্যে প্রতিটি দেশবাসী যে সক্রিয়ভাবে যুক্ত রবীন্দ্রনাথ সমরণ করিয়ে দেবার পূর্বে আমরা সে সম্পর্কে প্রায় উদাসীনই ছিলাম।

এই কারণে শিল্পীজীবনের সূচনা থেকে মানুষকে তিনি দেখেছেন বর্ষ ও বর্ণের আবরণ খসিয়ে, মানবিক অনুভূতি ও

আদর্শের বৃহত্তর পটভূমিকায়। তিনি জানতেন, মানবিক অনুভূতিই সকল সামাজিক রীতি-পদ্ধতি ও আচার-আচরণের মূর্তী। এই সব মানবিক অনুভূতি ও সংবেদনশীলতা দীর্ঘির অতল জলের মতো চিরদিন জনসাধারণের হৃদয়ে ও মনে বাসা বেঁধে থাকে, দুঃখ-বেদনার মধ্যেও তাদের সজীবিত করে রাখে। নৈরাশ্য ও হতাশার দিনে দীর্ঘির জল যখন শুকিয়ে আসে, তখন নতুন করে আবার জীবনের গভীরে মাটি খুঁড়তে হয়, যুগ-চেতনায় তাকে সমৃদ্ধ করে গিলতে হয়। এই সমৃদ্ধতর মানবিক অনুভূতিই রূপারত্নশীল সমাজজীবনের বনিয়াদ, সকল সামাজিক মূল্যবানের উৎস, কাব্য-দর্শন প্রভৃতি সমস্ত প্রচেষ্টা বহুভিত্তি।

অভিজাত বংশে রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্ম, উনিশ শতকের প্রথম-প্রসারণশীল ঐতিহ্যের আবহাওয়ায় তিনি লালিত। স্তত্রাং প্রাচীন সংস্কৃতি ও পাশ্চাত্য জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানের গির্ঘাসটুকু অনায়াস-লভ্য সহজ উত্তরাধিকারের মতো তাঁর আয়ত্ত হবে, এতে আশ্চর্যের কিছু নেই। কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের মূল্য আমাদের কাছে সেই কারণে নয়। উত্তরাধিকারের এত বিত্ত ও বৈভব সম্মে তিনি যে অস্বস্তি-প্রেরণার তাগিদে ক্ষীয়মান লোকসংস্কৃতির শীর্ণ ধারার দিকে চুটে গিয়েছেন, পাশ্চাত্য আবেগ অনুভূতির দ্বারা অনুপ্রাণিত হয়েও যে সমসাময়িক বুদ্ধিজীবীদের মত তাঁর বহিরঙ্গ রূপের কাছে আত্মবিক্রয় করেননি, এইখানেই তাঁর মহত্ব।

এতে প্রমাণ হয় যে, লোকসংস্কৃতির ঐতিহ্যশ্রী বলেই মাত্র পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার সার্থক অঙ্গীকরণ এবং প্রদেশী বনিয়াদের উপর নতুন সমসুখী সংস্কৃতির পতন সম্ভব। এই অর্থে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রাচীন ও নবীন পৃথিবীর যোগসূত্র, করেন পদ্মা ও অকুলীন বনুনার সেতুবন্ধ। আঙ্গীকরণ যদি আধুনিকতার পরিচয় হয়, তাহলে শুধু মাত্র এই কারণেই তিনি বর্তমান ভারতবর্ষে যথা আধুনিকতার প্রতীক।

রবীন্দ্র-মানসে উপনিষদ ও বৈষ্ণব গীতিকবিতার প্রভাব সম্পর্কে আমরা সবাই অল্প বিস্তর সচেতন। কিন্তু নাগরিক স্পর্ষবিজিত ধানের বন্ধনহীন উদার আকাশে যে গানের সুর ভাসে, যে গানে শুধু একক কবির নয়, সমস্ত জনপদের হৃদয়-কলরব শোনা যায়, সেই লোকসঙ্গীতের কাছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের গান যে কত গভীর, আমরা হয় তার খোঁজ রাখিনা, হয়তো তাকে বণায়খ গুরুত্ব দিইনা।

গ্রাম্য ঘরোয়া জীবনে প্রতিদিনের বিচিত্র কাজ যেমন চলেছে, তেমনি চলেছে, তেমনি তার পাশাপাশি চলেছে এক অপূর্ব প্রাণবন্ত সংস্কৃতির গঠনকার্য। প্রতিদিনের বিচ্ছিন্ন কাজ সেখানে সমবেত হৃদয়ের স্পর্শে সংহত হয়, পরসাম্মুখী অন্তরঙ্গতার ঐক্য-সূত্রে বাঁধা পড়ে। চিরাগত ঐতিহ্যের ধারায় দীর্ঘদিন এমনি করে নিষিদ্ধ হয়েছে বলেই বোধ করি গ্রামীণ গোষ্ঠীজীবন এমন আশ্চর্য প্রাণবন্ত সংস্কৃতি জন্ম দিতে, এবং দুঃখ-বেদনার মধ্যেও তাকে গভীর মেহে লালন করতে পেরেছে। অন্যভাবে সহজ প্রাণময়তার ফলে এই লোকায়ত সংস্কৃতি বাইরের আঘাত থেকে নিজেই শুধু রক্ষা করেননি, স্বীয় সংকীর্ণ পরিবারের বাইরে তাকে বহুদূরে পর্যন্ত সম্ভারিত ও করেছে।

আলিপুরে অথচ গভীর ভাবদ্যোতক, আনন্দিত অথচ করুণ এই লোকসঙ্গীত ও গ্রাম্য সাহিত্যের অপরূপ রাজ্যে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে কত স্বচ্ছন্দগতিতে বিচরণ করেছেন, তার সুরেল স্পর্শে যে কতবার অনুরণিত হয়েছেন, রবীন্দ্রনাথের অজস্র রচনায় তার স্বীকৃতি আছে। আর শুধু লোকসঙ্গীত বা লোকিক

উপকথাই বা কেন, লোকায়ত জীবনে প্রচলিত হিন্দু ও বৌদ্ধ পুরাণকাহিনীর অজস্র রূপান্তর ও রূপভেদের মধ্যেও তিনি বার বার অর্থবহ ইঙ্গিত খুঁজে পেয়েছেন, এবং গ্রাম্য সাহিত্য থেকে আহরণ-করা এই সব প্রতীককে নিজের মানস-সংগ্রামের বাহন হিসাবে ব্যবহার করেছেন।

প্রতীচ্যের কাছ থেকে শেখা আঙ্গিক রবীন্দ্রনাথ এসে যেন পরম সমাদরে লোকসংস্কৃতির কণ্ঠবেষ্টন করে ধরেছে, একে অন্যান্য রূপান্তর ঘটিয়ে নতুনতর রূপে মহীয়ান হয়ে উঠেছে। এই রূপান্তর যে কত দূরপ্রসারী, আমরা আজো তা ধরতে পারিনি। জনসাধারণের কণ্ঠ থেকে স্রব কেড়ে নিয়ে তিনি আবার তা জনসাধারণকে ফিরিয়ে দিয়েছেন নির্মূল গীতিকবিতারূপে। গ্রাম্য অশিক্ষিতপট্টর রবীন্দ্রনাথের রূপদক্ষতায়, তাঁর প্রতিভার স্পর্শে সজীবিত হয়ে আবার ফিরে গিয়েছে জনসাধারণের ছাউনি হীন ভাঙ্গা কুণ্ডলধরে। তাই দূরতম গ্রামের অশিক্ষিততম লোকের কণ্ঠেও আজ তাঁর গানের স্রব শোনা যায়, মাঠের আল-পথেও সে-গানের কলি স্পনিত হয়।

অনুবাদ অবশ্য এই রূপান্তরের সবটুকু স্বাদ পাওয়া যায় না, পাশাপাশি প্রবহমান এই দুই সংস্কৃতির সমন্বয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথকৃত পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষা-সন্ধানও মিলেনা। তবে অনুবাদেও একথা সহজ-বোধ্য যে, প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে ভারতবর্ষীয় সচ্ছ ও নিবিড় পরিচয় ঘটিয়েছেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। তিনিই আমাদের শিখিয়েছেন, বর্ষা-মধো রিজতা নেই, তার শামলতা অগ্নি। প্রকৃতি যে মানুষের হৃদয়ের মুঠোয়, তাকে যে ভর করা যায়, আপন করা যায়, প্রকৃতির অজস্র দাক্ষিণ্য যে মানবিক প্রয়োজনে আহরণ করা যায়, এ বিশ্বাস তিনিই জনসাধারণের মনে প্রথম জাগিয়েছেন। যারা বীজ বোনে, ধান কাটে, আর পথ গড়ে, তাদের সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের আত্মীয়তা ও একাত্মতার কারণও সম্ভবতঃ তাই।

তাছাড়া, আজ ইয়োরোপীয় যন্ত্রসভাতার চরম দুদিনে, আণবিক বোমার উদাত্ত হুমকিতে আমরা যখন ভয়ত্রস্ত হয়ে মৃত্যুর দিন গুণিচ্ছি, তখন জনসাধারণের মুহুর্তক্ষণী প্রাণধারণ অবগাহন করার ভিত্তির প্রয়োজন আছে। এতে আমরা জীবনের প্রতি বিশ্বাস ফিরে পাব। 'শত শত সামাজ্যের স্বংস্রোশ' পরে যারা কাজ করে তাদের অমরনীর সংগ্রাম-সংস্কার এত হতাশার মধ্যেও আমাদের অনুপ্রাণিত করবে।

জনসাধারণের সংগ্রামী শক্তির কথা বলতে গিয়ে আমি অবশ্য তার নেতিবাচনী দিকনির্দেশনা কথা ভুলে যাইনি। জ্ঞানি, নিয়তির কাছে তাদের আত্মসমর্পণ অনেক সময় অশ্রদ্ধেয়, কুসংস্কারের নিকট তাদের আত্মবিক্রম কলঙ্কজনক। কিন্তু এই নেতিবাচক মনোভাবের পিছনেও একটি ইতিবাচক প্রেরণা বরাবর উহা ছিল যার জোরে নিরুপায় নিশ্চলতার মধ্যেও ভালবাসায় এবং ভক্তিতে তারা পরকে আপন করেছে, পরম পরমতসহিকৃত্য সত্যসন্ধানের পৃথক পৃথক পথে সাধানুযায়ী অগ্রসর হয়েছে। সংগ্রামের এই সর্বকর্ম দিকনির্দেশনা চোখের আড়ালে থাকে বলে আমরা প্রায়ই এর কথা ভুলে যাই।

হাজারো দুর্বলতা সত্ত্বেও জনসাধারণের এই অপরিমেয় শক্তির সম্মান রবীন্দ্রনাথের জানা ছিল। অভিজাত এবং বুদ্ধিজীবী মহলের অগ্রচারী হয়েও লোকসংস্কৃতির কাছে হাত পাতে তাই তিনি কোনদিন কৃষ্ণিত হননি। রবীন্দ্র-প্রদর্শিত সেই পথ বর্জন করলে, একালের বুদ্ধিজীবী সম্প্রদায় নতুনতর বিপদট ডেকে আনবে মাত্র।

অতিকথনের দোষ স্পর্শ করলেও আর একবার বলা দরকার যে, আমরা অপস্রম্যান অতীত ও অনাগত ভবিষ্যতের প্রান্ত-সীমায় দাঁড়িয়ে আছি। প্রাচীন পৃথিবীর মানুষ ভাগ্যের দুর্য্যারে মাথা কুটেছে, প্রকৃতির ও অর্থনীতির অন্ধ সূত্রের কাছে যথা নুইয়েছে, কিন্তু আজকের মানুষ জানে, বন্ধা জ্বলিতও সোনা ফলানো যায়, অর্থনীতির অন্ধ সূত্রকেও বাণ মানানো সম্ভব। স্বতরাং দূরতর সঙ্গে ভবিষ্যতের দিকে আমাদের পা বাড়াতেই হবে, নতুবা পূর্ণজাগরণের আলোড়নটুকু খিতিয়ে গিয়ে আমরা খাবার অচলায়নের মধ্যে আটকে পড়বো। ভবিষ্যতের পথে আমরা চলব সন্দেহ নেই, কিন্তু তার আগে জনসাধারণ সম্পর্কে ভীতি বা অবজ্ঞার মনোভাব আমাদের কোড়ে ফেলতে হবে, জনসাধারণের শক্তি ও ক্ষমতার নন করে শঙ্কান হতে হবে। আমার ধারণা, রবীন্দ্রনাথ আমাদের সে-শিক্ষাই দিয়েছেন।

II ২ II

নতুন মনুষ্যধর্মের প্রচার যদি আমাদের জাতীয় পূনর্জাগরণ-প্রচেষ্টায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম মহৎ দান হয়, তবে তাঁর দ্বিতীয় দান অজস্র রচনামাধ্যমে বাংলায় নবাবিভূত মনবিশিষ্ট ও মিলন-মনবিশিষ্ট শ্রেণীর কয়েকটি মূল 'মাইপ' চরিত্রের রূপদান এবং সাহিত্যের স্বতন্ত্র শিরদৈর্ঘ্য হিসাবে কবিতা নান্দ্য চোঁটগর, বিশেষ করে, উপন্যাসের পরিপূর্ণতা সাধন। এক্ষেত্রে তিনি তাঁর সমসাময়িক সকল ভারতবর্ষীয় চেয়ে সাহসী ও কৃশলী। সাহিত্যের আয়নার প্রতিফলিত করে তিনি দেশবাসীকে নিজের চেহারা দেখিয়েছেন, তাদের সত্যিকার স্বরূপ পৃথিবীর সামনে তুলে ধরেছেন। সত্যের স্বরূপ উদ্ঘাটনে তিনি সঙ্কোচহীন, যুক্তোভয়; দেশবাসীর অনুরাগ-বিরাগের প্রতি তাঁর এতটুকু ক্ষোভ নেই। এই আত্ম-দর্শনের মূল্য সম্পর্কেও আমাদের চেতনা খুব সামান্য। আমরা জানি না, যে, সাহিত্যের আয়নার দেশকে সম্পূর্ণ করে না দেখলে আত্মবোধ কোনদিনই সুষ্প হয় না। এখাচ, রবীন্দ্রনাথের আগে দেশকে কি আমরা কখনো সম্পূর্ণ করে দেখেছিলাম? মানুষকে আমরা এতদিন দেখে এসেছি শাশ্বের সজীব শ্লোক হিসাবে। রবীন্দ্রনাথে আমরা প্রথম দেখলাম যে অতি মহৎ এবং অতি নীচ, অতি সজ্জন আবার অতি ক্রুর। তাঁর মধ্যে ভালো-মন্দের সংঘাত আছে, বিচার বিদ্রোহ এবং মতবৈচিত্র্য আছে—আবার দ্বিধা-দ্বন্দ্ব, সংশয়-আক্ষেপেরও অভাব নেই। সব মিলিয়ে সে জীবন্ত রক্তমাংসের মানুষ, আর জীবন্ত বলেই এই জটিল সমস্যাসঙ্কল বুকের প্রতিনিধি।

এখানেও রবীন্দ্রনাথের কৃতিত্ব, তাঁর চরিত্রস্রষ্টা ভারতবর্ষের এক প্রাচুর্য্যিত একটি অঞ্চলের জীবনরূপায়নেই পর্ববসিত হয়নি। পাশ্চাত্যের শ্রোয়বাদমূলক এবং ভারতবর্ষের সংস্কার ও ধর্ম-ভিত্তিক দুটি বিভিন্ন ধর্ম সংস্কৃতির সংঘাতে আমরা যখন দুলছি, সংকটের মূর্ত্যবর্তে আমরা যখন প্রতিমূর্ত্তে স্রবপ্রবাহের মত দিনাতিপাত করছি, তখনকার কিছু আশা ও অনেক নৈরাশ্য, একটু সংকোচ ও অনেকখানি বিপ্লবতার বিরাট পটভূমিকায় অঙ্কিত বলে তাঁর চরিত্রগুলি আঞ্চলিক হয়েও আর অঞ্চলনিরুদ্ধ থাকেনি, সর্বভারতীয় হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে।

একথা বলার অর্থ এই যে, আধুনিক বিচারে আমরা যাকে ব্যক্তিত্ব বলি, তার সার্থক রূপায়নে রবীন্দ্রনাথই অগ্রণী। ব্যক্তিত্ব-রূপায়নের এই প্রচেষ্টায় স্বাভাবিকভাবেই তাঁর হাতে উপন্যাসের

আঙ্গিক বিষয়বস্তু চেষ্টা অনেক দ্রুততর গতিতে এগিয়েছে। ভারতীয় উপন্যাস এই প্রথম স্বতন্ত্র শিল্পরূপ হিসাবে স্বকীয় মর্যাদায় প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। তাঁর রচিত প্রথম কয়েকটি উপন্যাসের উপর নির্ভর করেছে আমি দৃঢ়তার সঙ্গে বলব, আঙ্গিক শিল্পশৈলী ও গঠননীতির বিচারে রবীন্দ্রনাথই ভারতবর্ষের প্রথম উপন্যাসিক।

পূর্ববর্তী অনেক রসোত্তীর্ণ রচনার অস্তিত্ব সত্ত্বে, এমনকি বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের উপস্থিতি অগ্রাহ্য করে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে ভারতের প্রথম উপন্যাসিক আখ্যা দেওয়া অনেকের কাছেই বিস্ময়কর ঠেকবে। সত্যতা উপন্যাস বলতে আমি কি বুঝি সাহিত্যের অন্তর্গত এই বিশেষ শিল্পরূপটি সম্পর্কে আমার ধারণা কি, তার বিশদ ব্যাখ্যা প্রয়োজন। তাহলে কি কারণে আমি পুরোধাগমীদের দাবী সরাসরি অগ্রাহ্য করে আপাতদৃষ্টিতে অনৈতিহাসিক এমন উক্তি করবার দৃঃসাহসিক ঝুঁকি নিয়েছি, তার তাৎপর্য বোঝা যাবে। এই প্রসঙ্গে বলে রাখা ভালো যে, যদিও শিথিলভাবে আমরা কাহিনী বা আখ্যায়িকামূলক বর্ণনামাত্রকেই উপন্যাস দিতে অভ্যস্ত, তবু সাম্প্রতিক ধারণা অনুযায়ী সেগুলো বড় জোর কথকতা, উপন্যাস কিছুতেই নয়। আখ্যায়িকা, উপাখ্যান, ইত্যাদি গল্পের বহুধারা যুগে যুগে বিস্তৃত হয়ে কিস্কদন্তী ও জনশ্রুতির সহযোগে নানা মনের ছাপ নিয়ে মুখে মুখে অথবা পুথির অক্ষরে উৎকর্ষ লাভ করেনি, তা বলছি না—কিন্তু গল্প তখনো কোন বিশিষ্ট দৃষ্টির শিল্পে নির্ধারিত নয়।

এই কথকতার তও রবীন্দ্রনাথও একেবারে অনুপস্থিত বলিমা, তবে এখানে তার রেশ ক্ষীণ। আর শিল্পের নতুন রূপ সম্পর্কে তিনি পুরোপুরি আত্মসচেতন। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের তুলনায় তাঁর উপন্যাসে যদি অবাস্তব অগ্রাসঙ্গিকতা থেকেও থাকে, শক্তি ও দৃঢ়তার অভাব যদি কখনো অনুভূতও হয়ও—তবু সে অভাব পুথিরে গেছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অপরূপ গীতনৃত্য, তাঁর সূক্ষ্ম সবেদনশীলতায়। অদ্ভুত অস্তিত্বের তিনি চরিত্রের, বিশেষ করে, নারী চরিত্রের ছন্দে গিয়ে পৌঁছেছেন এবং তুলির স্বয়ংক্রিয় আঁচড়ে একই সঙ্গে তাঁর ব্যক্তিক ও সর্বকালীন রূপটি ফুটিয়ে তুলেছেন। গোরা'র আনন্দময়ীতে ভারতীয় মাতৃমহর যে শাশ্বত রূপায়ণ দেখেছি আর কোন উপন্যাসিক তা করেছেন বলে জানিমা। শুধু আনন্দময়ী বা কেন? বিমলা, কুমু, কমলা ...প্রতিটি চরিত্র ভারতীয় নারীমহর প্রতীক, আমরা সমাজে তাদের চলাফেরা করতে দেখেছি, তাদের সঙ্গে কথা কয়েছি, ভালো-বেসেছি। জীবন থেকে উপন্যাসের পাতায় উঠে এসে এরা যেন অনুযোগের স্তরে, এমন কি চ্যালেঞ্জের স্তরে বলছে, "দ্যাখো, ভারতীয় সভ্যতার যে অর্ধাংশকে তোমরা নির্ধারিত করে রেখেছে তাদের স্বরূপ দ্যাখো।"

তারপর, পরেশবাবুর মত জ্ঞানবৃদ্ধ, সংযত, শাস্ত, গোম্যা, শ্রমিচরিত্র—গোষ্ঠিপতির পরম উদারতায় যারা প্রাচীন সমাজকে নিজেদের পক্ষপটে আশ্রয় দিয়েছেন, ভিষকের মতো যারা মিয়মান শয্যাশায়ী সমাজকে মমতায় আর গুণ্ণায় বাঁচিয়ে রেখেছেন, অভিজ্ঞতালব্ধ সাধারণ বুদ্ধি দিয়ে যারা সমাজকে পরিচালিত করেছেন আর যাবার আগে উত্তরপুরুষকে তাদের সঞ্চিত জ্ঞানভাণ্ডারের উত্তরাধিকার দিয়ে গিয়েছেন—যুক্তিবাদে শ্রদ্ধাশীল, সংস্কারে প্রতি স্নেহবান তেমন উদারনৈতিক উদারমনা চরিত্র ত্রিশচলিশ বছর আগেও এই সমাজে ছিল। সমন্বয়পর্যায় এই সব চরিত্রকে আমরা বুক থেকে নিশ্চিত হবার পূর্বে রবীন্দ্রনাথ হয়তো খানিকটা রঙ চড়িয়েই এদের আঁকেছেন, কিন্তু তাঁর

বক্তব্য বোধহয় এই যে, বয়োবৃদ্ধদের সম্পর্কে ইয়োরোপীয় দৃষ্টান্ত আমরা যে শস্তা নাটকেপণায় অভ্যস্ত হচ্ছি, তার পুনর্বিচার আবশ্যিক। যুগেচেনার সঙ্গে এঁদের মনোভাব না মিলতে পারে, কিন্তু ঐতিহাসিক এই সব জ্ঞানবৃদ্ধ একেবারে অবহেলায় আঁতাকুড়ে ফেলে দেবার মত নয়।

তারপর রবীন্দ্রনাথের তরুণ নায়কের দল। এরা যুগ-প্রতিনিধি, কিন্তু ভবিষ্যৎ সম্পর্কে আত্মবিশ্বাস ও আশাবহ নয়। এদের কেউ কৃষিবুদ্ধি, হিংসার, লালসার স্থূলতায় সাংঘাতিক, আর কেউবা হঠকারী, স্বপ্নালস, রোমাঞ্চিক। এদের কথায় ও কাজে, চিন্তায় ও চেতনায়, বুদ্ধিতে ও অনুভূতিতে সর্বত্র অসামঞ্জস্য রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্ক্রোকশলে দেখিয়েছেন যে, এজন্য এরা নিজেরা রত্না অপরাধী, তার চেয়ে অনেক বেশি অপরাধ তাদের প্রতি করা হয়েছে। সামাজিক প্রতিবন্ধকের কাছে তারা বলিপ্রদত্ত, স্বযোগের অভাবেই তারা আদর্শক বিসর্জন দিয়েছে। কিন্তু এদের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে সাংঘাতিক চরিত্রটিও মানবিক গুণে সমৃদ্ধ। ভালো-মন্দের দ্বন্দ্ব নতুন জীবনকে এরা বাছতে চেয়েছে বিবেকের দ্বারা, প্রখার অনুশাসনে নয়। এইখানেই তাদের মনুষ্যত্ব। নতুন জীবন-প্রণালী খোঁজবার বহুধাবিজ্ঞান সার্বিক সংগ্রামে এদের পরাজয় হয়েছে সন্দেহ নেই, কিন্তু মহত্তর জীবন-রচনার সংগ্রামে অংশগ্রহণকারী সৈনিকরূপে এরা এগিয়ে।

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নতুন জীবন-রচনার পথ অনুসন্ধানে এই নিরবচ্ছিন্ন প্রয়াসই রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার তৃতীয় বৈশিষ্ট্য। তাঁর রচনাবলীর সর্বত্র এই কথাটিই যেন তিনি বলতে চেয়েছেন যে, নতুন জীবন-রচনার সংগ্রাম শাশ্বত, চিরন্তন এবং বহুমুখী। মূল্যবোধের উন্নততর মানদণ্ড আবিষ্কার, মানবিক গুণে জীবনকে সমৃদ্ধতর করা এবং ব্যক্তি-স্বরূপকে পূর্ণরূপে বিকশিত করাই, তাঁর বিচারে, এই সংগ্রামের মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য।

তাঁর মুখে নিরন্তর প্রশ্নঃ কি করে আমরা সেই সিদ্ধিতে পৌঁছব? কি পদ্ধতিতে, কোন প্রণালীতে আমরা বাঁচব? কোন মূল্যবোধকে আমরা নতুন সভ্যতার ভিত্তি হিসাবে গ্রহণ করব? মানবিক মূল্যের সন্ধানে তাঁর আকৃতি এত অকৃত্রিম যে আমরা ধারণা, বর্তমান মুহূর্তে রবীন্দ্রনাথের এই বৈশিষ্ট্যটিই আমাদের কাছে সবচেয়ে মূল্যবান। ঐতিহাসিক যুগসংক্রান্তির দিনে আমরা কোন পথে চলব, কি করব, কিভাবে আমাদের সিদ্ধি নিকটতর হবে, সে সম্পর্কে তিনি যত প্রস্তাব উত্থাপন করেছেন, যত পথের নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন, তেমন আর কেউ দেননি। অথচ, রবীন্দ্র-প্রতিভার এদিকটি সম্পর্কে আমরা আশ্চর্যরকম উদাসীন।

লেখক জীবনের প্রথম থেকেই তিনি শুধু কবি মন, দার্শনিকও। পিতা মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাবে অতি শৈশব থেকে প্রাচীন হিন্দু চিন্তা ও ধ্যান-ধারণার সম্পর্কে এলেও তাঁর গোড়ামি-মুক্ত মন কোদিনই ব্যক্তি-বিকাশের আধ্যাত্মিক ছককে নির্বিচারে মেনে নেয়নি। উনিশ শতকের পাশ্চাত্য বিজ্ঞান ও যুক্তিবাদের আঘাতে আমাদের মাসনিক সংকট যখন তীব্র হতে তীব্রতর হচ্ছে, তখন তার সমাধানে প্রাচীন ধ্যান-ধারণা কতটুকু সহায়ক হতে পারে, নতুন মূল্যবোধের পিছনে তার কোন খাঁকা দান সম্ভব কিনা, রবীন্দ্রনাথ সেই খোঁজেই ব্যস্ত ছিলেন।

এশিয়া ও ইউরোপের মৌলিক বিরোধ, যাকে বিশ্বাস ও

অবিশ্বাসের সংঘাত ব্যাখ্যা দিলেও ভুল হয় না, তার মীমাংসায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের দূরদৃষ্টি অনেক সময় গোচরে কথা স্মরণ করিয়ে দেয়। গোচরে মতোই তিনি জীবনের অর্থ ও উদ্দেশ্য ঝঞ্জেছেন সংস্কারের উর্বে, প্রথা ও অনুশাসনের বাইরে, পুথিগত পাণ্ডিত্যের অনায়ত্ত সহজ মানবিকতায়। তাঁর এই প্রচেষ্টা আমাদের সমৃদ্ধতর এবং অর্থবহ জীবনযাপনে সহায়তা করেছে।

এই প্রসঙ্গে লক্ষণীয় যে, 'আধ্যাত্মিক' অনুভূতি সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সংস্থা প্রচলিত ধারণার সম্পূর্ণ বিরোধী। উদাহরণ স্বরূপ উল্লেখ করা যায়, রূপ সমাজতন্ত্রের অনেক জড়বাদী দানকে তিনি আধ্যাত্মিক বলেই গ্রহণ করেছেন। এছাড়া, শিল্প, সাহিত্য, সঙ্গীত, দর্শন ইত্যাদিতে অভিব্যক্ত মানুষের সৃষ্টিগুণী সম্ভাবনার ভিত্তিতে নতুনতর বিশ্বাসের উদ্ভাবনায় তিনি আস্থাবান ছিলেন এবং সেই বনিয়াদের উপর মহৎ মানবিক গুণ-সমৃদ্ধ নতুন পৃথিবী রচনার সম্ভাব্যতার কথা তিনিই প্রথম বলেছেন।

স্বীকার করা ভালো যে, রবীন্দ্রনাথের কিছু কিছু বিশ্বাসের সঙ্গে আমার বা আমার সমকালীন অনেকের মতৈক্য নেই। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এক প্রাচীন ঐতিহ্যবাহী সমাজের পরিব্রাজক; পথের সন্ধানে তিনি দেশে দেশে তীর্থপরিক্রমায় বেরিয়েছেন, কিন্তু অতীত স্মারকের লোভবহ কখনো পরিত্যাগ করে যাননি; আমরা আধুনিকেরা আরও হালকা হয়ে দেশ করতে ভালোবাসি। কিন্তু বর্ণাশ্রমের বাইরে, সংকীর্ণ লোভের উর্বে ভিন্নতর জীবন-যাপনের বহু পদ্ধতি যে আছে এবং খাঁকা সম্ভব—একথা রবীন্দ্রনাথই আমাদের প্রথম দেখিয়েছেন। অন্ধবিশ্বাস ও কুসংস্কারের পাথর-চাপা মনকে তিনি আলোর পথ দেখিয়েছেন, অপ্রস্তুত মনকে নিভস্র বিবেক ও বিশ্বাস অনুযায়ী পথ চলবার সামর্থ্য জুটিয়েছেন।

অবশ্য সে-প্রসঙ্গের অতিরিক্ত পথের সন্ধানও তিনি কম দেননি। দৃষ্টান্ত স্বরূপ বলা চলে, আজ আমরা যা ক্রমে ক্রমে উপলব্ধি করছি, বহু দিন পূর্বে তিনি তার ইঙ্গিত দিয়ে বলেছিলেন, বিজ্ঞানকে উপায় রূপেই দেখতে হবে, উদ্দেশ্য রূপে নয়। অদ্বৈত দূরদৃষ্টিতে তিনি সেদিন ভবিষ্যদ্বাণী করেছিলেন, বিজ্ঞানকে জীবন থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন করে ছদ্মহীন লাবরোরিটে নির্বাসন দেওয়ার ফল শুভ হবে না, উপায়কে উদ্দেশ্যের মর্যাদা দিয়ে আমরা বিপদই ডেকে আনবো। এই জন্য তিনি লাবরোরিটে থেকে পাওয়া সংবাদ শুনে, তার গ্রহণযোগ্য অংশটুকু আত্মসাৎ করেও বলেছেন, ঝরপার স্বনিঃসংকেত আর চন্দ্রলীলা, এবং নদীর গতিভঙ্গীকে শুধু রসায়নের ফর্মুলা দিয়ে ব্যাখ্যা করা যায় না। বিজ্ঞানের প্রাণহীন সংকীর্ণতা সম্পর্কে সচেতন থেকেও অন্য অর্থে অস্থি তিনি বিজ্ঞানেরই কবি। স্বতন্ত্র পদ্ধতি ও বক্তব্যের ভীড়ে, পরস্পর-বিরোধী ও একেপেয়ে অভিজ্ঞতায় বিজ্ঞানের প্রতিটি শাখার গভীর যখন ক্রমশ সীমিত হয়ে আসছে, তখনও তিনি অখণ্ড, পরিপূর্ণ মানুষ থাকতে চেয়েছেন, আমাদের মত মানুষের ভগ্নাংশ হতে রাজী হননি। এই কারণে, জীবনের প্রতিটি অভিব্যক্তিতে—সামাজিক, নৈতিক, রাজনৈতিক ও নান্দনিক সকল দিকে সর্বব্যাপী সামগ্রিক অনুরাগে রবীন্দ্রনাথই বোধ করি এযুগের সর্বশেষ পরিপূর্ণ মানুষ। জীবনকে শিল্পেরই মতো সূক্ষ্মায় মণ্ডিত করে তার সকল পাপড়ি সমানভাবে মেলে দেবার সেই আগ্রহ প্রকাশ পেয়েছে তাঁর কথায়: আমি শুধু আলো হাতে নিয়ে দাঁড়াতে চাই না, অন্তরালকে আলোর মত নিজে জ্বলে উঠতে চাই। এই জ্বলে ওঠার আগ্রহেই তাঁর চিন্তা মূলত: আধুনিক এবং মানবিক। তিনি বিশ্বাস করতেন যে, সাহস

ও দূরদৃষ্টি থাকলে প্রকৃতিকে জয় করে, অজ্ঞেয়কে জেনে আমরা 'জ্বলে ওঠা' মানুষের পক্ষে খুব দুরূহ নয়। অবশ্য আমার ধারণা, ডি'হলবাখ-এর মতো তিনিও শেষ পর্যন্ত মনে করতেন, সামাজিক চিন্তার ফলে আদর্শ-বিপ্লব না ঘটলে এবং সামাজিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের রূপান্তর না হলে সমাজ-জীবনের অগ্রগতি অসম্ভব।

এই প্রসঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের আন্তর্জাতিকতা সম্পর্কে আলোচনা করা যেতে পারে। তাঁর আন্তর্জাতিকতার আদর্শ নিঃসন্দেহে আমাদের বর্তমান স্বপ্নকামনার অগ্রদূত। অথচ এ ব্যাপারে তাঁর অনুভূতি একান্তভাবে ভারতীয়। বিরোধ এবং সংঘাত সম্বন্ধে সমন্বয়ের যে সহিষ্ণুতা ভারতীয় ইতিহাসের প্রধানতম বৈশিষ্ট্য, সমবেদনা ও সহানুভূতির যে বরণটি আমাদের প্রাচীন মানবিকতার ভিত্তি, রবীন্দ্রনাথের আন্তর্জাতিকতা তারই যুগানুগ অভিব্যক্তি। বহু জাতি, অজস্র জনগোষ্ঠি, বিভিন্ন ভাষা ও স্বতন্ত্র মানস-দৃষ্টির সমন্বয় ও সমন্বয়ে ভারবতর্য হচ্চ কাল থেকেই ছোটখাটো একটি আলাদা জগৎ। এই আলাদা জগতে আমরা মেছে-মমতায়, আত্মীয়তায়-সমবেদনায় পরস্পর একসঙ্গে বেঁচেছি, একটি সাধারণ সংস্কৃতির স্রোতধারায় সবাই নির্দিষ্ট একসঙ্গে অবগাহন করেছি। স্বতন্ত্রা দাবী করা যায় যে, যজ্ঞান ও সচেতন ভার উপলব্ধি না করলেও আন্তর্জাতিকতার বীজানু চিরদিনই আমাদের রক্তে সঞ্চিত রয়েছে। বৌদ্ধধর্মে ও বেদান্তের আদর্শে একদিন তার যে অভিব্যক্তি দেখা গিয়েছে, রূপভেদে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তারই আধুনিক কণ্ঠস্বর শোনা গেল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের দৃষ্টি বিশ্বাস ছিল, বিরোধী স্বার্থের সংঘাতসম্বন্ধে ভারবতর্য যে সহিষ্ণুতার বলে এক সাধারণ সভ্যতার উত্তরাধিকার বহন করতে পেরেছে, তারই ব্যাপক অনুসরণ সমগ্র পৃথিবীকে নিকটতর বন্ধনে টেনে আনতে পারে। 'বিশ্বভীরতী' পৃথিবীকে সেই এক নীড় বাসাবারই পরিকল্পনা। এরই আগ্রহে তিনি ইউরোপ, আমেরিকা ও দূরপ্রাচ্য ঘুরে বেরিয়েছেন, লাভের লোক পৃথিবীকে যেভাবে হিংসায় উন্মত্ত করে তুলেছে তার বিরুদ্ধে দৃঢ়কণ্ঠে সারধানবাণী উচ্চারণ করেছেন।

পৃথিবী তাঁর সাবধানবাণী মর্যাদা দেয়নি। অশীতিতম জন্মবাষিকীতে তাই তাঁর ব্যথিত কণ্ঠ থেকে বড়ো দুঃখেই উচ্চারিত হয়েছে:

"আজ মানবায়ার অপমানে দিগন্ত থেকে দিগন্ত পর্যন্ত বাতাস কলুষিত করে দিয়েছে।....

'জীবনের প্রথম-আরম্ভের সমস্ত মন থেকে বিশ্বাস করেছিলুম য়ুরোপের সম্পদ অস্তরের এই সভ্যতার দানকে।' আজ আমার বিদায়ের দিনে সে বিশ্বাস একেবারেই দেউলিয়া হয়ে গেল। আজ কাশা করে আছি, পরিব্রাজকতার জন্মদিন আসছে আমাদের এই দারিদ্র্যলাঞ্ছিত কনিষ্ঠের মধ্যে।....

'মানুষের প্রতি বিশ্বাস হারানো পাপ, সে বিশ্বাস শেষ পর্যন্ত রক্ষা করব। আশা করব, মহাপ্রলয়ের পর বৈরাগ্যমুক্ত আকাশে ইতিহাসের একটি নির্মল আত্মপ্রকাশ হয়তো আরম্ভ হবে এই পূর্বাচলের সূর্যোদয়ের দিগন্ত থেকে। আর একদিন অপরাহ্নিত মানুষ নিজের জয়যাত্রার অভিযানে বাধা সকল অগ্রসর হবে তার মহৎ মর্যাদা ফিরে পাবার পথে। মনুষ্যত্বের অস্থায়ী প্রতিকারহীন পরাভবকে চরম বলে বিশ্বাস করাকে আমি অপরাধ মনে করি।"

তাঁর এই কথাগুলি কি আমাদের বর্তমান চিন্তারই পূর্বাভাস নয়?



রবীন্দ্র কাব্যের বারমাস্য

ইন্দ্রি দেবীচৌধুরাণী

প্রকৃতির সৌন্দর্য চিরদিনই মানুষের মনকে মুগ্ধ করেছে। যখন সে মায়ের কোলে শিশু তখনও সে আনন্দে ছাত বাড়িয়ে “আয় আয় চাঁদা মামা” বলে ডাকে; আবার যখন তার জীবনের কাছ শেষ হয়ে যায়, তখন গঙ্গার তীরে শেষ নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করে স্বস্তি পায়।

কিন্তু আমাদের সাধারণ মানুষের জীবন বড় সঙ্কীর্ণ, বড় বিক্ষিপ্ত, বড় খণ্ডিত, বড় ছাটের ধূলা-ধূসরিত; তাই এই নিত্য সঙ্কীর্ণ কাছে সর্বদাই যে দান পাই, তা সম্পূর্ণরূপে উপভোগ করতে বা তার আনন্দ প্রকাশ করতে সকলে পারি না। পারেন কেবল তাঁরা যারা ঋষি এবং কবি, যারা দ্রষ্টা এবং হাষ্টা। বৈদিক যুগে ঋষিগণ প্রকৃতির স্তম্ভ ও ভীষণ শক্তি-পুঙ্ক্তকে দেবতাক্রমে করণা করে স্থব করেছেন। আধুনিক যুগের কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ প্রকৃতির চয় ঋতুকে

“আগা দিয়ে ভাষা দিয়ে
হাতে ভালবাসা দিয়ে”

“মানসী পতিমা” রূপে গড়ে তুলেছেন। তাঁর গ্রীষ্ম সন্ন্যাসী, তাঁর বর্ষা রাজা, তাঁর শরৎ দেবী, তাঁর হেমন্তলক্ষ্মী, তাঁর শীত চন্দ্রাবেশী বৃদ্ধ, তাঁর বসন্ত পথ-ভোলা পথিক।

দুটি একটি ঘটনাচক্রে রবীন্দ্র কাব্যে প্রকৃতি-বর্ণনা নিয়ে আমার একটি বিশেষভাবে নাড়াচাড়া করতে হয়েছে। সেগুলির সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা করে আমার এই ভূমিকা শেষ করবো।

এই ক্ষেত্রে বৈশাখ থেকে চৈত্র পর্যন্ত নানান স্তম্ভের প্রাকৃতিক বর্ণনা উদ্ধৃত করি, যা এখনও পুরানো ‘ভারতী’র পাতা খুঁজে পাওয়া যেতে পারে। তারপর অপেক্ষাকৃত আধুনিক কালে বহুদিন পূর্বে একবার শান্তিনিকেতনে বেড়াতে আসি; তখন এঁদের “রবীন্দ্র পরিষদ” বলে এক ছাত্রসভা থেকে আমাকে কিছু বলতে বলেন। সেবার আমি তাঁর কাব্য থেকে “ছবি” উদ্ধার করবার চেষ্টা করেছিলাম; অর্থাৎ “সঙ্কল্পিত” থেকে সেই সব অংশ নির্বাচন করেছিলাম যাতে একটি স্তম্ভের ছবি মানসনেত্রে ফুটে ওঠে। মনে আছে সেই তালিকা এত দীর্ঘ হয়েছিল যে, অবশেষে আমাকে খামিয়ে দিতে হয়েছিল। ভয় নেই! এ ক্ষেত্রে তার পুনরাবৃত্তি হবে না। বহুদূর পূর্বে শান্তিনিকেতনে স্থায়ী ভাবে থাকতে এসে আমার মনে একটি পরিকল্পনার উদয় হয়। সেটি হচ্ছে একটি রবীন্দ্র দেওয়ালপঞ্জীর সংকলন। প্রকৃত-পক্ষে আমার একটি জার্মান বান্ধবীর কাছে এই পরিকল্পনাটির জন্য আমি ঋণী। পরিকল্পনাটি এই যে, রবীন্দ্র-কাব্য থেকে প্রত্যেক মাসের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত বর্ণনা দেওয়া থাকবে এবং তার

উপরে সেই বর্ণনার উপযোগী ছবি আঁকা থাকবে, এবং নীচে যথারীতি মাস সপ্তাহ ও বারের চক্ কানি থাকবে।

আমি বিশ্বভারতীর কর্তৃপক্ষকে অনেকবার এই কল্পনা কার্যে পরিণত করবার জন্য অনুরোধ জানিয়েছিলাম। কিন্তু দূত্যাগবশতঃ তাঁরা আমার এই অনুরোধ রক্ষা করতে পারেননি। এমনকি পূজণীয় অবনীন্দ্রনাথের নির্দেশ অনুসারে পূর্ণিমা দেবী (গাঙ্গুলী) বারো মাসের কবিতা চয়ন পূর্বক ছবি পর্যন্ত এঁকে দিয়েছিলেন।

আমার কাছে এখনও সেই কবিতাপুস্তকটি আছে। এবং পূর্ণিমা দেবীর কাছে নিশ্চয়ই ছবিগুলি আছে। এখনও যদি কেউ চেষ্টা করেন তবে আগামী চৈত্র মাসের মধ্যে এইরকম একটি রবীন্দ্রপঞ্জী প্রকাশ করা অসম্ভব নয়। আমার তো মনে হয় বিক্রি হবে, তবে অবশ্য খুব স্থলভা মূল্য করা সম্ভব হবে না।

আমার ইচ্ছা প্রথম মুখপত্র স্বরূপ সম্বৎসরের বর্ণনাত্মক একটি কবিতা থাকবে; যথা—

“এমনি ধীরে একটি করে কাটিছে দিনরাতি।

বসন্ত সে বিদায় নিল লইয়া যুথী জাতি ॥

সঘন মেঘে বরষা আসে, বরষে ঝর ঝর।

কাননে ফুটে নবমালতী, কদম কেশর ॥

স্বচ্ছহাসি শরৎ আসে, পূর্ণিমা মালিকা।

সকল বন আকুল করে শুভ শেকালিকা ॥

আগিল শীত সঙ্গে লয়ে দীর্ঘ দুখনিশা।

শিশির ঝরা কুন্দফুলে হাসিয়া কাদে দিশা ॥

কাণ্ডন মাস আবার এল বহিয়া কুল ডালা।

জানাল পাশে একেলা বসে ভাবিছে রাজবালা

কে পরালে মালা ॥”

তার পর ক্রমশ প্রত্যেক মাসের একটি করে কবিতা ও তদুপ-যোগী ছবি থাকবে। যথা—

বৈশাখ

“চারিদিকে শস্যরাশি চিত্রসম স্থির,

প্রান্তে নীল নদীরেখা, দূর পরপারে

শুভ চর, আরো দূরে বনের তিমির

দহিতেছে অগ্নিদীপ্তি দিগন্ত মাঝারে ॥”

জ্যৈষ্ঠ

“বসি আঙিনার কোণে গম ভাঙ্গে দুই বোনে

গান গাছে শান্তি নাহি মানি;

বাঁধাকুপ, তরুতল, বালিকা তুলিছে জন,
ধরতাপে মান মুখখানি।”

আঘাত

“মনে পড়ে সেই আঘাতে ছেলেবেলা
নালার জনে ভাগিয়েছিলাম পাতার ডেলা।”

শ্রাবণ

“বেলা যায়, বৃষ্টি বাড়ে
বসি আলিশার আড়ে,
ভিজে কাক ডাক ছাড়ে মনের অস্থখে।
রাজপথ জনহীন,
শুধু পায় দুই তিন,
ছাতার ভিতর লীন, ধায় গৃহমুখে।”

ভাস্কর

“মেঘ ভুটে গেল নাইগো বাদল,
আয়গো আয়!
আজিকে সকালে শিখিল কোমল
বহিছে বায়।
পতঙ্গ যেন ছবি সম আঁক।
শৈবাল পরে মেলে আছে পাখা,
জলের কিনারে বসে আছে বক
গাছের ছায়।”

আশ্বিন

“আশ্বিনের মাঝামাঝি উঠিল বাজনা বাজি
পূজার সময় এল কাছে
নব্বি দুই ভাই চুটুচুটি করে ভাই
আনন্দে দু’হাত তুলি নাচে।”

কাহিনী

“বেলা দ্বিপ্রহর;
হেমন্তের রৌদ্র ক্রমে হতেছে প্রধর।
স্নিগ্ধ অশথের ছায়
ক্লান্ত বৃদ্ধা ভিখারিণী জীব বজ্র পাতি
ধুনায়ে পড়েছে; যেন রৌদ্রময়ী রান্ধি,
ঝাঁঝ করে চারিদিকে নিস্তব্ধ নিবৃত্ত।”

অগ্রহায়ণ

“ওই বান কাটে, ওই করিছে কক্ষণ,
ওই গাভী নিয়ে মাঠে চলেছে গাছিয়া,
ওই যে পূজার ভরে তুলিতেছে ফুল,
ওই নৌকা লয়ে যাত্রী করিতেছে পার।”

পৌষ

“পাণ্ডু আকাশে ঝড় চক্ষু হিমালীর পানি মাখা।
পল্লবহীন বৃক্ষ অশথ, শিহরে নগ্ন শাখা।”

মাঘ

“শীত তুমি ছেখা কেন এলে?
উত্তরে তোমার দেশ আছে।
পার্থী সেখা নাছি গায়ে গান
ফল সেখা নাছি ফুটে গাছে।
সকলি তুমার মকময়
যকনি আমার জনহীন,
সেখায় একেলা বসি বসি
জানীপো, কানীপো তব দিন।”

ফাল্গুন

“তুমি কি বসেছ আজ নব বরষেশে গাভি,
কুতলে কুণ্ডমরাজি অন্ধে লয়ে বীণ?
ভরিয়া আরতি খালা আনায়েছ দীপমালা
গাজিয়েছ পঞ্চডালা নৃতন নবীন,
আজি বসন্তের দিন।”

চৈত্র

“আমাদের এ পল্লীবাণি পাহাড় দিয়ে ঘেরা
দেবদারু কৃষ্ণে বেনু, চরায় রাখালেরা।
কোথা হতে চৈত্র মাসে চাঁসের শ্রেণী উড়ে আসে
অশ্রুবেতে আকাশ পথে যায় যে তারা কোথা,
আমরা কিছুই জানিনাকো সেই স্বপ্নের কথা।”

এই কবিতাগুলির সঙ্গে যদি পূর্ণিমা দেবীর ছবিগুলি দেওয়া হয় তাহলে দর্শকদেরও ভালো লাগবে, আমার বক্তব্যও, পরিস্ফুটনের হবে এবং আশা করা যায় বিশ্বভারতীর কর্তৃপক্ষের কাছে আমার রবীন্দ্র পঞ্জীর আবেদন নিতান্ত অরণ্যো রোদন হবে না।

শেষে এই কথাটি আপনাদের সমরণ করিয়ে দিতে চাই রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্য is so rich and various in special apprehensions of truth যে, দু’কথায় তার পরিচয় দেওয়া অসম্ভব। আমার আসল কথা এই—বাঙলা সাহিত্য যদি বাঙালী জাতির শিক্ষার অন্যতম উপায় হয়—তাহলে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে এ-মুখে আমাদের সর্বপ্রধান শিক্ষাগুরু তার আর সন্দেহ নেই।

—প্রথম চৌধুরী

ପ୍ରକାଶ-ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ - ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ - ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ - ଶିଳ୍ପର ବିକାଶର ମାର୍ଗ
ଆବୃତ୍ତି - ୧୫ - ୨୦୮ ଆମର ପ୍ରକାଶ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ।

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ବିଜୟ-ସାଗର ।

2014-2015
 2014-2015

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কবির প্রতিভাষণ

একদা কবির অভিনন্দন রাজার কর্তৃবা বলিয়া গণ্য হইত। তাঁহারা আপন রাজমহিমা উজ্জল করিবার জন্যই কবিকে সমাদর করিতেন—জানিতেন সাম্রাজ্য চিরস্থায়ী নয়, কবিকীর্তি তাহাকে অতিক্রম করিয়া ভাবীকালে প্রসারিত।

আজ ভারতের রাজসভায় দেশের গুণিজন অখাত-রাজার ভাষায় কবির ভাষায় গৌরবের মিল ঘটে নাই। আজ পুরসভা স্বদেশের নামে কবি সংবর্দ্ধনার ভার লইয়াছেন। এই সম্মান কেবল বাহিরে আমাকে অলঙ্কৃত করিল না, অন্তরে আমার হৃদয়কে আনন্দে অভিষিক্ত করিল।

এই পুরসভা আমার জন্মনগরীকে আরামে আরোগ্যে আয়সম্মানে চরিতার্থ করুক; ইহার প্রবর্তনায় চিত্রে, স্থাপত্যে, গীতিকলায়, শিল্পে এখানকার লোকালয় নন্দিত হউক, সর্বপ্রকার মলিনতার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে অশিক্ষার কলঙ্ক এই নগরী ঝালন করিয়া দিক,—পূর্ববাসীদের দেহে শক্তি আশ্রুক, গৃহে অন্ন, মনে উজ্জম, পৌরকল্যাণ সাধনে আনন্দিত উৎসাহ। ভ্রাতৃবিরোধের বিযাক্ত আত্মহিংসার পাপ ইহাকে কলুষিত না করুক—শুভবুদ্ধি দ্বারা এখানকার সকল জাতি সকল ধর্মসম্প্রদায় সম্মিলিত হইয়া এই নগরীর চরিত্রকে অমলিন ও শাস্তিকে অবিচলিত করিয়া রাখুক—এই আমি কামনা করি।

বসন্তকুমার

২৭শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩১



"Uttarayan"
Santiniketan, Bengal
19/11/33

Cities are organic expressions of culture. Up till today our cities have grown up, as much of our entire life has, chaotically. They have been imitation of Europe and their lives have flowed in channels which have been sometimes at tangent, sometimes parallel to our own. Now that India is slowly coming to her own our towns should mirror our national culture and artistic sensibility. I look forward to a Calcutta which will reflect this ideal.

Rabindranath Tagore

—A MESSAGE TO THE "CALCUTTA MUNICIPAL GAZETTE"
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS NINTH ANNIVERSARY, 1933

[illegible]

[illegible]

ਸੁਖੁ ਮਿਲਿਓ ਆਨੰਦੁ ਮਾਯਿ
ਭੀਰੁ ਪਰਾਪੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਮਾਯਿ

[illegible]

பரிசுதாரனாக

આમાર કીર્તનાર પાસે લેખાઈ ગયેલા
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નહીં મારે મારે કંઈ યાં આસાનમારે,
નહીં રાધે ક્યાં ક્યાં રાધે કાંઈ ગારે ગારે ॥

કાલ આમાર વિજયન, મેં કાંઈ હેમ,
ક્યાં આમાર વિજયન શીવેલામ ।
મિલે ભાગ મિલે મારે મારે આમાર,
આમાર કીર્ત પાસે આમાર એ મુલાકાત,
આમાર કીર્ત મારે આમાર મુલાકાત,
મુલાકાત આમાર ક્યાં ક્યાં આમાર આમાર ॥

૨૪ ફેબ્રુઆરી
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શ્રીવિજયન

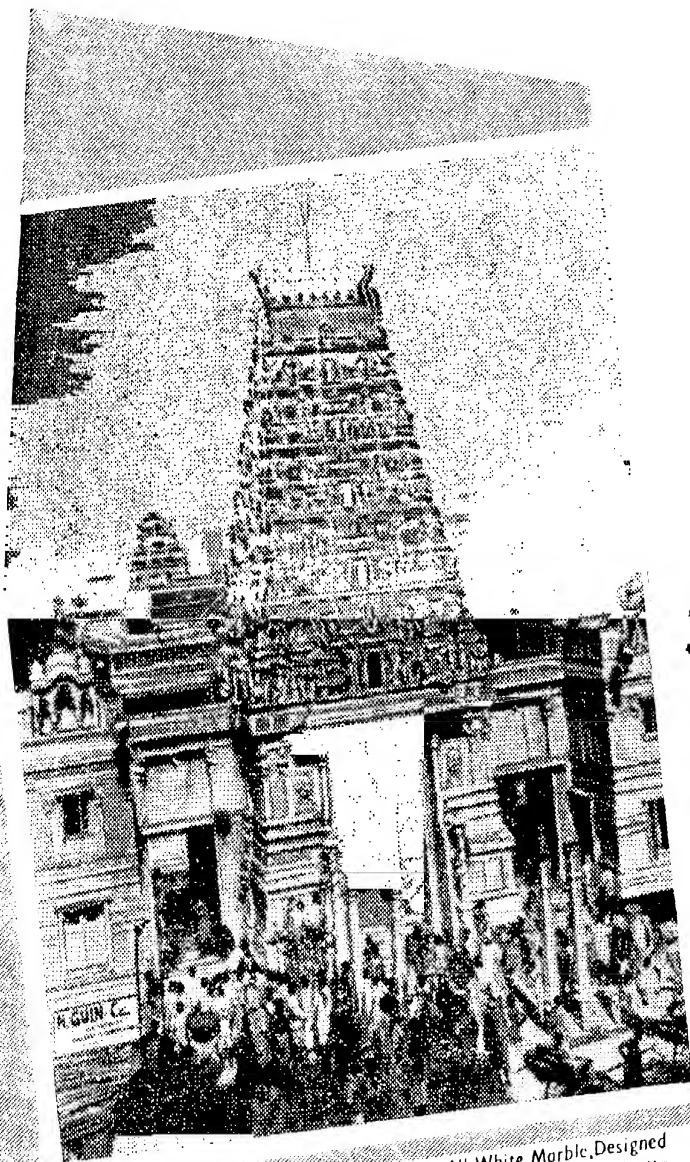
યાચાર મારા સાચા મિત્રોનું। એવું કુમાર
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 અત્યંત મહત્વાર્થ। સ્વચ્છતા રહે રહેશે
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 બાંહેડી મારા રજાની મળી રહેશે મારા મૂલ્ય
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 મારા મૂલ્યનાં મૂલ્ય; મારા મૂલ્યનાં
 પ્રાણનાં મૂલ્યનાં। એ મારાં મૂલ્યનાં મારા મૂલ્ય
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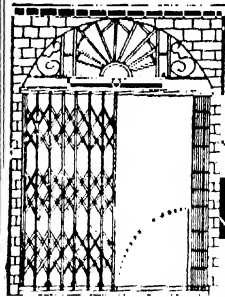
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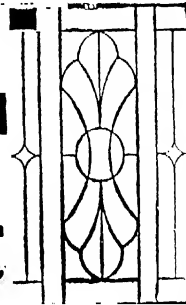


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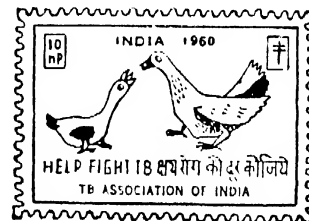
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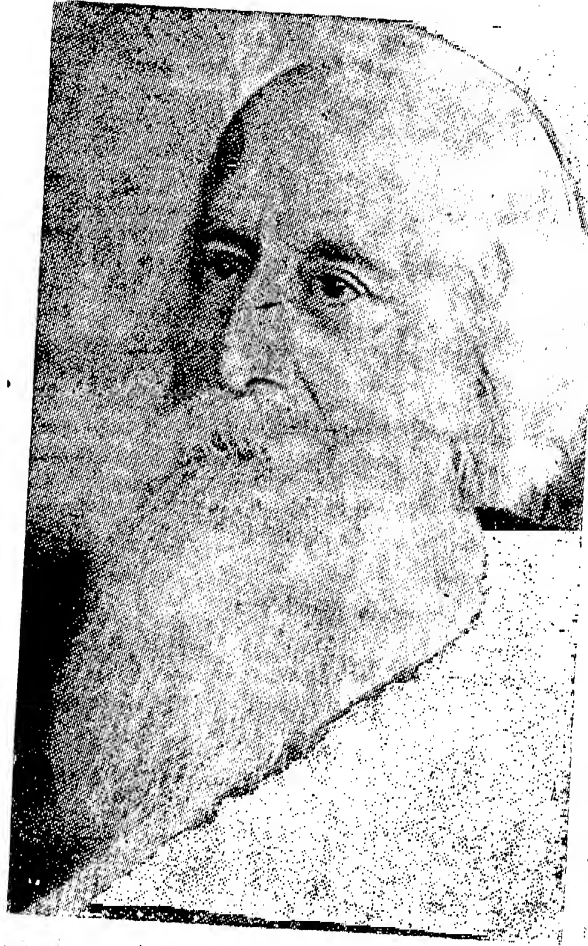


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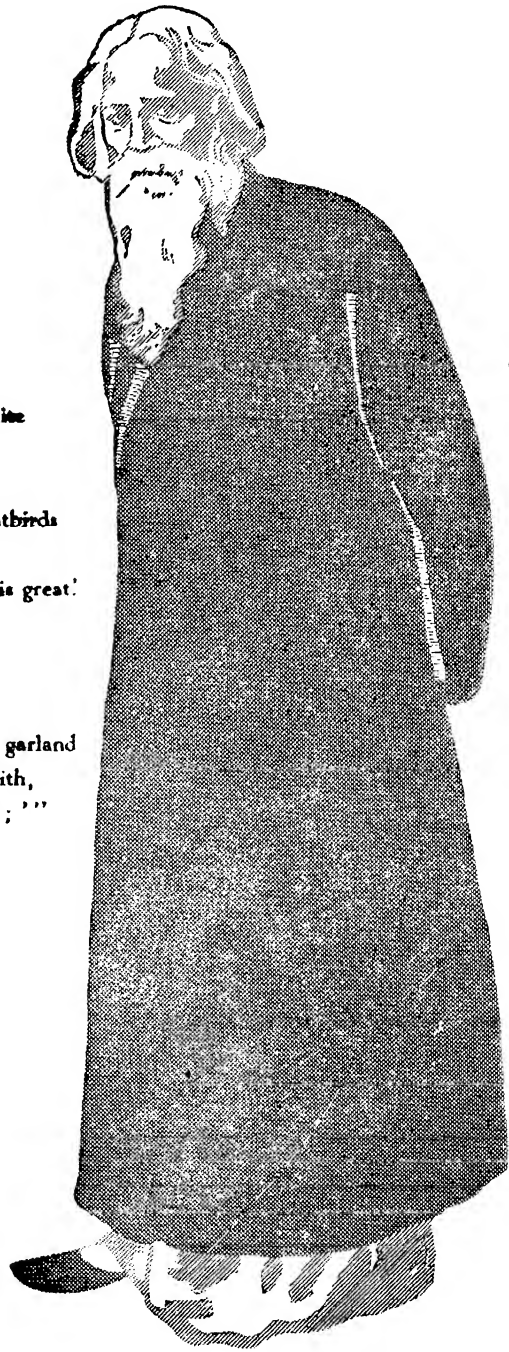
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আমাদের সন্মান
শ্রী, অক্ষ, সি, এল, লিঃ
কল্যাণ শতক, কালকিষ্কর, শতক

Man is great

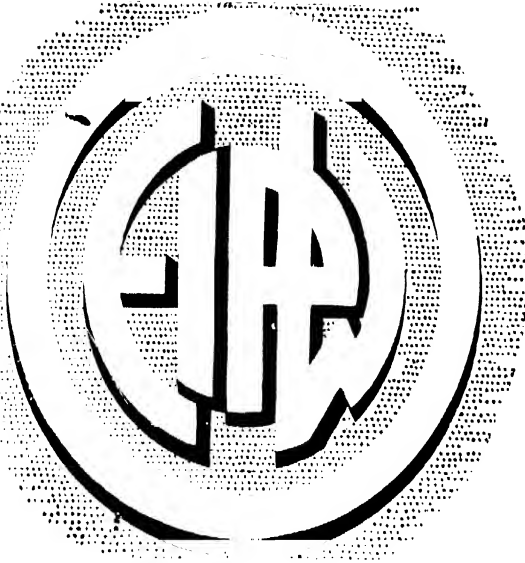
"There on the crest of the hill
stands the Man of faith amid the snow-white
silence,
He scans the sky for some signal of light,
and when the clouds thicken and the nightbirds
scream as they fly,
he cries, 'Brothers, despair not, for Man is great.'
Men raise their heads and look up,
Women lift their arms in reverence,
Children clap their hands and laugh.
The early glow of the sun shines like a golden garland
on the forehead of the Man of faith,
and they all cry, 'Brother, we salute thee ; '"

*Rabindra
Centenary
1961*

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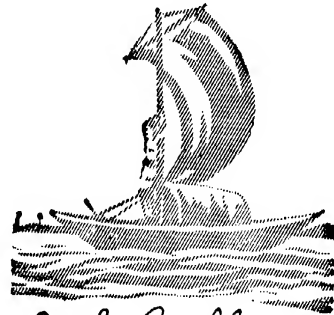


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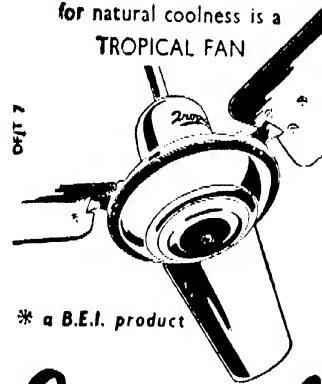
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*Rabindranath Tagore in his reply to the
Civic Address presented on the occasion of
his Seventieth Birthday Celebrations, 1931.*

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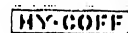
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 On the crest of awakening dawn
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 proclaiming "Fear Not."

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 to the Coming of Man.

— Tagore



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 গুল্লোকে বেজে গুঠে শঙ্খ
 নরলোকে বাজে জয়ডঙ্ক
 এল মতা জয়ের লগ্ন
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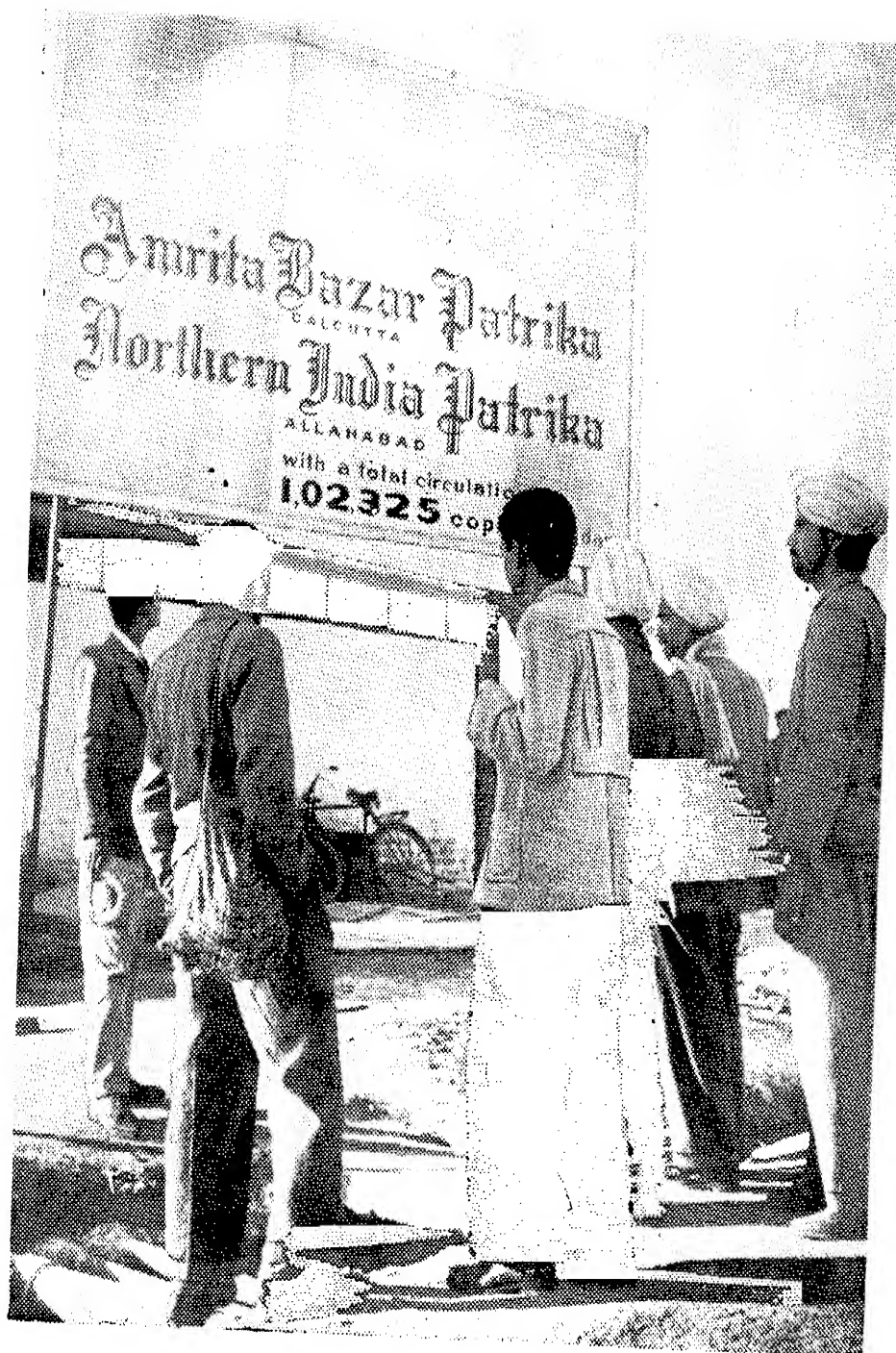
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